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# Epistolary Discourse

On the great Assistances to a

## CHRISTIANS FAITH

And for a more *Intire Rest* and  
*Assurance* in the highest Trials and  
Adventures thereof.

WITH A

## Second Part,

Upon the Present Times, and  
these rare Vicissitudes of *Providence*  
in the Publick State of *Britain* in this  
AGE.

To which an APPENDIX is Added  
in the C L O S E.

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By R. Fleming, Minister of the Gospel  
At ROTTERDAM.

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James Wilson

By A. Wilson, Minister of the Gospel

1840



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TO THE  
QUEEN.

MADAM;



Should not with  
confidence have  
adventur'd on  
this *Address*, and  
*Dedication* to  
Your Majesty of  
the following

Discourse, and in such an *Episto-  
lary Method*, if the weight and  
greatness of the Subject did not  
warrant the same; which is e-  
( a 2 ) qually

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qually divided betwixt the interest and state of a Christian, and the publick state of the Church with such eminency of Providence; and wonderful vicissitudes hereof, as have in a successive course, and series been brought forth on the Publick Theatre of *Britain* in this Age, and now in that late and great *event* wherein such an *august* and immediate appearance of God hath been witnessed, as might still seize the Spirits of Men in this Atheistical Age with a tremendous sense and impression of the same. In both which respects, I hope what is thus humbly offered upon so high a concern of truth will not be ungrateful to Your Majesty, who is known to value  
Your

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Your State and Interest, more as a *Christian*, than as a *Monarch*, which was once the saying of *Theodosius* the Great. and does yet tend to render his memory more honourable than that he was an *Emperor*.

It is unquestionable that the State and Security of *Britain* hath stood by an extraordinary course of Providence for these many years past, and that according to the improvement made to answer the intent and ends of such unusual things we may expect in the same manner to have God either for us or against us; and as it is one of the most observed testimonies of Divine favour to a Kingdom and  
( a 3 ) People,

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People, when such are raised on the Throne of Government, who are of as *Publick a Spirit* as of *Relation*, for the Interest of Religion and the true Politick good and safety of such a place, with an impartial respect; so it is no less observable, that where there is an eminent design of Grace in a Saving Work to a *Nation*, and to prevent a desolating Judgment ere it break forth, how some have been in a more than ordinary way excited with special Heroick Motions to be instrumental herein, whose way and appearance for God did not answer to the ordinary standard of Mens actings; on which account there have been signal discoveries given in this late time to  
*Britain.*

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*Britain and Ireland*, if there were a more suitable regard of the same; but as the Sovereign God hath, by an astonishing course of extraordinary Providences, thus made way for the Publick Settlement of this *Island*, and to place on the *Throne* these, whose capacity to Rule might be no less conspicuous from most rare Enduements of mind, than by Regal Authority and Power; he hath also proportioned to *Both Your Majesties*, Trials, and Work of an unusual kind, and determined Your Reign in such a juncture of extraordinary trying times, as needs some unusual and great assistance of Divine Counsel and Support, no less

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to stemm an Impetuous Tide of Atheism and Impiety within, and to have an awful regard to the Divine Government kept up in these times, then to appear against the greatest of Adversaries without: Yet surely if Grace may interpose for a restoring work again to these Nations, and for a suitable answering to so eminent a season and opportunity, we might then expect such an appearance of God, as can bring forth that in a *day* or *year*, which may seem not easie to expect in an Age, and cause such Mountains, as seem most insuperable in the way hereof, to flow down at his presence.

It's

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It's on this Subject I have spoke farther in these *Papers*, and if some things be not grateful to many in this *Day*, it was not designed to please Men, or under the influence of a private Interest, but for the Truths sake, as a Minister of *Christ*, and to rest my Soul on his approving Testimony herein.

I know Your *Majesties* desire and delight lies more in serving the Publick good of *Britain*, and of all the Churches of *Christ*, than to hear thereof, which does serve a just restraint to speak in this *address* what is due, and more becoming to witness at a distance, if

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it were not to speak in behalf of God, these singular engagements You are under to him, and for his interest and truth, beyond any *Princess* on the Earth, or for some Ages past upon it, and that he hath chosen to give Your *Majesty* such a room, in a rare and unusual manner, as *on whom he hath delighted to honour*, and trust the concerns of his Kingdom to; and to whom he hath given that interest in the hearts of a People (who are as the sand of the Sea innumerable) so as to Govern more by the attractions of love and delight, than by the extent of Civil Authority; and I may in a particular way speak, that as it was not possible ever for a Great Person



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son to part from a People more highly desired and valued, than Your Majesty did from all ranks of that *Illustrious State of Holland*, so is the same sense, and most desirable remembrance still continued, as a *Witness of divine respect* that in such a manner is rarely given to Princes and Rulers.

*Madam*, tho these *Papers* had, in their first rise, some respect to a more private use, yet being now made publick, wherein truths of so high a concern to this present day, and the state of the Church are offered, it did give the more confidence for a humble claim to the Patronage of so great a name.

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It is now a time of great *thoughts* and expectation, as to the future state of the Catholick Church; and that these Promises are very near to their full height and accomplishment which have respect to the highest glory, and extent of Christ's visible Kingdom on the Earth, before its final translation to its eternal and triumphant state in Heaven; and its much desired and hoped, that *Your Majesties Reign* may, in a *preparatory* way, be made eminently subservient thereto; it's sure that great event of Providence will, in *due time*, be the best expounder of its self, and the onely *wise God* sees it fit to *proportion* our light here; in, and further breaking up of the  
same

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same to what's necessary for our work and duty; but I have much wished, that the *proressive course* and coming of *Christ's Mediatory Kingdom* under the *New Testament*, and these more remarkable periods of its gradation, were more studied and enquired into, which should *make way* for a more clear *Idea* and *Notion* of the same according to that pattern given hereof in the *Mount* by Divine *Record*; which bears the same *resemblance* to the *state* of a *Christian* in its progress and ripening for Heaven by being thus changed from *Glory* to *Glory*, until it come at last to that *full stature* and pitch which it shall have within time: this should, I humbly judge, make

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it more easie to decide, and unite these differences of judgment on this *Subject*, which make so great a noise, and let us see, that there can be no distinct Kingdom of the Lord *Jesus* expected here on the Earth which is yet to have a beginning, or any such thing as a *Fifth Monarchy*, but what onely imports the highest advance, and perfections of the *Churches state within time*. And I hope if these times of the *Gentiles*, and fulness thereof were in their true sense more deeply considered (which is in this *Discourse*, but specially in the *Appendix* touch'd) it might tend to a clearer discerning *what watch of the night we are now in*, and direct our *faith*, as to *future things*,

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*things, the fulfilling whereof will be as an entry of the Church into a new horizon, but such where the highest discoveries of light will be of no farther extent, than the scriptures of truth by a more full understanding of the same, which is surely the most clear and desirable prospect we can have of future times, and that brightness which will be then before the second coming of Christ.*

It hath been, and is my serious desire, that Your Majesty, with that truly Wise and Magnanimous Prince the King, may be yet more highly honoured in the work of Your Day, in order to so great an end,

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end, and for a Restoring of these Nations again to God, and that Your Names thus may be transmitted to succeeding Times, as the Restorers of Breaches. I am

**M A D A M,**

Your Majesties most humble  
and devoted Servant,

*R. Fleming.*

# Preface.

**T**He Publishing of this following Discourse, had no rise, or call, from the desires or importunity of any, or the least Motives of such a nature; but I hope it was with desire, that it might have some interest in the service of the Truth in such a time; it's true, what's offered in the First Part of these Papers, had a very Providential Rise in Writing of the same, and was directed for the Personal Use of one, who did not take a light and transient view of the great consequence of a Christian's hope, and of his Soul's venture for all Eternity herein; but did reckon the greatest interest of his joy and comfort within time, to lie in a solid rest and perswasion on the certainty of Divine Truth: It is indeed a great weight that lies thereon, when it's the interest

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*of an Eternity ; but it seems a rare thing for Men to know what the Christian Creed means, or to believe the Articles of their own Faith. The greatest contest which is now on the Earth, is betwixt God and Man, on the Testimony of his Word, as to an intire and absolute reliance thereon ; and whether Humane Security on visible grounds, or the assurance of the God of Truth, when there is no concurrence of any sensible evidence herewith, be most prevalent and desirable to support the Mind under its greatest fears.*

*What is the special subject and intent of the following part of this Discourse, is of a very different nature, as relating wholly to the publick State of the Church, and that extraordinary administration of Providence, which hath been in this last Age; wherein some inquiry hath been made, and light offered in the words of truth and soberness. It is now a time both of great fears, and of expectation and hope, in a more than ordinary way, and there is surely just cause for both ; some things I must speak here, in a preliminary respect,*



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spect, which may be matter of Sad thoughts and reflection. 1. Tho it is one of the most astonishing depths and mysteries of Providence about the Church, under the times of the New Testament, that great Scene which hath been of late acted on the Theatre of Britain and Ireland, with such a successive course of publick changes that have gone over the same for these 50 years past? yet, though we have thus lived in an Age of wonders, for the most part, we have not had eyes to see, or hearts to consider until this day, that one great end and design which God hath been still persuing hereby, but seems to be still as a dark riddle; as also in how eminent a manner all oppositions that have been yet made thereto, have tended to their fall and breaking, who have essayed the same. 2. How notwithstanding such a growing height of Atheism, Impiety, and Controlling the Design and Methods of Grace and Providence, yet hath not the hedge of Divine Protection been taken down about these Nations, without which, no humane Power or Counsel, could

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*have to this day prevented a National ruine; but when things oft have come to a visible extremity, there hath been most observable alleviations herewith in a very surprising way. 3. But what may lie more near to a deep and serious regard, is the very sad aspects of Providence, and present signs of the time, which have such an unusual appearance in this day, if we reckon our interest now on the earth to lie more with God than with Men; it's true, things of that kind does rarely affect our spirits, for it's not the Voice of his Word, or Works can now have a bearing; yet it is even under the most tremendous warnings from Heaven, that a door of hope hath been still kept open by new offers of Peace, and to shew, that Judgments threatned are not always decreed, if there might be a meeting of God, whilst he is in the way, and some to stand up in the Gap before him, when in a more than ordinary manner it is now called for, to appear herein, that the Land be not destroyed.*

*It is indeed not easie to discern the times we are in, or to consider wisely the outgoings of Providence towards the Churches*

## To the Reader.

Churches of Britain this day; & there are two things especially, that may be matter of great thoughts, for being clearly understood; the one is that after such an eminent appearance of a Divine concurrence in successful events, and to a clearing of our Skie, how quickly a surprising darkness falleth down in such a manner, as Judgment and Mercy seem to keep an equal pace, by down-casting, and up-rising; but though the onely wise God sees it oft fit to hide his work when it's nearest, to some great appearance hereof, yet is it now time to hear, ere it be too late, when judgment speaks once, and again, for a Peoples taking the same to heart; and that he does thus hold his hand, even when it's lifted up to strike; yea, when in so different a manner he warns, it may be judged, there is some great and extraordinary work then on a very near approach.

But there is a II<sup>d</sup> thing which I doubt not will most affect Mens Spirits this day, with serious thoughts, to know on what side the scale may fall, in the decisions of providence, as to the Publick State, & what shall

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be the end of all these wonders ; *tho it were well if present duty more than future events were the subject of our thoughts*, when we know who holds the ballance in his own hand ; and it is sure, *if light were more purely, and with a humble spirit sought after*, we are not left to a doubtful judgment about the future state and destiny of the Church ; I hope also in such a day there are found, who in a more than ordinary way, may be laid near to know the Counsel of God, by that promised Unction of his Spirit : I mean such onely, who does prefer a Sanctifying Work on their Soul, to the most extraordinary discoveries of this kind, and knows no other light, but in the way of revealed Truth ; but on a Subject of such concern (as I have desired humbly to offer light in the ensuing Discourse) so shall but speak a few words farther, for a safe Judgment, and directing of our faith herein. 1. That the strangest events of Providence, in this time, must undoubtedly be concentrick with that one great design of God, which  
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## To the Reader.

he is now accomplishing, and its our being so much in the dark here, why we understand so little how all these mutations tend, and by an irresistible conduct are directed, to prepare the way of the Lord herein. 2. How it cannot possibly be judged, but that this growing Apostasie of the Gentile Church, now in the most purely reformed part thereof, under a Protestant Profession, must have some extraordinary mark of Divine Judgment set thereto; and as the first times of the Gentiles were the purest and best times, so is the last period now so nearly hastning, like to be the worst, and most fatal part thereof; yea, the sad degeneracy every where of the Gentiles, seems to be coming to that height, as the Glory of Divine Justice, will be concerned to cut off once their visible priviledges, before their Restauration again; and by an eminent tender of Grace, upon such a forfeiture of the same, to give a new grant, and holding of their right, but such as shall be no more in a distinct and separate state, but a new entry and betrothing  
of

## To the Reader.

of them, *as a part of Christ's Universal Kingdom, with the Converted Jews; whose love then to him will be in such a fervor and flame, as to revive that antient and first love of the Gentiles; and its until then, we are, I humbly judge, not to expect any farther conversion of the dark Nations; yea that it is with the final close of these Times, the Ultima Clades, of the Reformed Churches, and that Third Woe, foretold under the Last Trumper, seems to take place, and have their proper room, in the great frame of Providence, which may be as a midnight hour of darkness, when it is nearest to the dawning.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**I** was from an excessive desire to speak things in as few words as possible, in such an *Epistolary way*, that I fear, may at the first view render some things more dark. There are also several considerable *Mistakes in the Printing*, which I must refer to the Reader's tender notice and construction of the same. I know that a *Table of Errata* is rarely noticed, so that I must rely on a favourable sense and reflection hereon, when such escapes does occur both in Letters and Words only; p. 122. l. 28. Read by for within; And Appendix, p. 14. l. ult. Read this for Jonas.

## HONOURED SIR,



**T** was a sweet surprisal in such a time as this to meet with a friend on whom: I found a more then ordinary sence and weight of the greatnesse of the Christian Faith; and to have another prospect of such

attainment, to enjoy an entire rest and assurance of mind herein then most seem to have; even of the more serious part of Christians; which did render it the more desirable to offer some thoughts to you on so weightie a concern, not onlie to answer a special promise and engadgment I was under; but with hope, through the good hand of the Lord, that such a service may not be wholly lost for the end it is designed. But on so great a subject I must go a little out of an Epistolary way both in the method and measure; and what in the first place I would speak to is this, that I durst offer nothing to divert, or take off any thing of the suitable weight of so choise an exercise as is so rare in these times, under which your spirit is so much pressed, but were it needful rather to add thereto on these grounds.

A

1. That



1. That it is surely the greatest designe can fall under the consideration of mankind for men to have such an assurance of divine truth, as can both answer the greatnesse of that adventure they have thereon, and can fully quiet and comfort the soul when visible refuges, and humane assistances, seem wholly to succumbe; and since we must either have an entire rest, and settlement herein, or none at all, I know not how to judge otherwile of that ordinar sence, and implicit credit on so great an account as this, then as a degree, and evidence of the sad Atheism of this day we are now in. 2. If ever I knew any thing of the way of God in truth, I must reckon this the highest enjoiment of a Christian, where the *security, and quiet of his mind*, upon the truth, answers to so great a *Revelation* hereof, and I know he is thus on sure terms with God, on the whole adventures of his trust; when it is so near to adventure on the triall thereof in the last *decision* of there eternal state; yea when thus they know how to enjoy a promise for there support in this state of warefare, under a *long deferred hope*, tho the whole course of providence would seem to controul the same, knowing the ground the *anchor* on cannot possibly faill: since this should be the *ultimate Inquiry* about the event, that if sure they have a *divine testimonie* to warrant their confidence, and if the highest joy and comfort of our life be not stated on such an account it



strange. 3. If it be understood what it is to be a  
 Christian in earnest, and what is called for of  
 such amidst the numerous tryalls and tempta-  
 tions of this *militant State*; it must need some  
 higher degrees of *assurance*, and inward establish-  
 ment, then seems by most to be either appre-  
 hended or sought after; and that, such have some  
*proper stock* of his own, of these *special aides and*  
*assurances* as may be at hand in ane hour of *tryall*,  
 for how can the life, and serious work of Godli-  
 nesse, be conceivable under such common and  
 transient impressions; as most have of the truth  
 and certainty hereof. 4. Doe men know what *Chri-*  
*stianity* means, and the high consequence of such  
 a distinguishing profession, from the residue of  
 mankind, or is there any suitable exercise of rea-  
 son about the greatnesse of that hope of the Gos-  
 pel, which we have set before us, and yet be a  
 subject both of ordinary thoughts, and assent  
 hereto, which may still be as though it were a  
 new discovery to us in the present day since it  
 might be judged, that if there were a *Metbuse-*  
*lahs* age to pass within time, this should be a sui-  
 table, and continued exercise therein both to en-  
 quire, and admire on the assured hope of ane eter-  
 nity with God, which they have before them, and  
 that they are to enter into a state, where they  
 shall be in the same *Classe* with the Angels of  
 Heaven, and made equal unto them; I have  
 known such who for many years have been dazzled

with the glorie, and greatness of that *Mysterie of Christ* and of life, and immortality in a future state, as hath made it there continued and highest exercise, to have a further, and new strengthening of there faith herein, who yet all that time knew not what it was to be shaken, or to have any inward fear as to there own personal interest herein; but still found the *Revelation of the Gospel*, so great a thing, and there spirits so deeply sealed with the *wonders* of our Religion, that whatever did tend to a higher strengthening of their faith herein, was also the greatest addition to their joy, and in that sence did most understand such a saying, *nunquam satis magna securitas in re tanti momenti ubi periclitatur eternitas.*

But in the next place what thoughts I would humbly offer to one of so *knowing and judicious* a spirit, and where so great assistances you may have access to improve other ways, shall be most in a *directive way* upon a *sevenfold inquiry*, that may be of greatest weight for a Christians laying the *ground work* of their profession on solid and clear grounds, which lyes first here.

I. To know that rare and peculiar *order* that is fuitable in a Christians *first entry* on Religion, under a serious weight of the same on their spirits since as in any great studie, there is an *entrance* and a *progresse*, and that it is sure in the whole *frame of Christianity* there is so entire a correspondence as nothing stands alone by it self, but

in a line of mutual respect, which in that manner runs through the same, as an entry aright upon one step, must make way to render a further progress clear and unavoidable, so here I must judge.

1. That a Christian should once make it such a proper and solemn business, and work by it self, to attain a solid founding, and settlement of their faith on the truth, and to list his soul in such a manner, as if he were then to enter on the Christian profession, without respect to example, education, or influence of any humane authority, or whatever any external motives could have weight herein, since in a case of that high concern men should in the greatest recess and composition of spirit, have some distinct special time, such as may be matter after of sweet reflexion to them, how they did then prove themselves, with respect to so high and discriminating a profession, from the residue of the world, and did thus with full inward consent join in with the truth purely on its own evidence, as though there were none of that profession in the bounds and place they lived in.

2. As the naturall order of things should require that the foundation be sure laid, ere we begin to build; so is it sure that the first entry on serious Religion, must be on the Faith of the divine nature, and existence, and that men have assuredly a God to trust to, and to make them happy, as

*Hebr. 11: 6. he must first beleeve that he is, &c.* and in the same order, *John 17. 3. must beleeve him to be the only true God, ere he come to beleeve Jesus Christ whom he hath sent:* O how uncomfortable a thing should humane state be without God, and an absolute dependance on him, who might see his life to be rather a *curse*, and torment, then *blissing*, if there were no *supernatural help* above himself, against the evil, and miseries of time, and to subdue the distempers of the mind, and the fears that should thus sease upon him both as to his present and future state; but what possible comfort could there be in the light of a *Deity*, or enjoiment of a *Godhead*, if we know not with assurance also, the *Excellencies* of his *blest nature*, and what a *God* we have to adventure on.

3. Thus by an unavoidable constraint there must be a further *progresse*, and *enquirie* upon the certaintie of a *revealed rule of correspondence*, betwixt *God and man* here. both in order to *dutie*, and what we may expect, and hope from him; and if it be sure this day that there be an expresse, and clear revelation of his will herein to be found in the earth; that comes with full and infallible evidence to men; for here is it not possible to stand or fix until our faith be once settled, on the truth of such a *divine record*, when we see in what estate poor mankind were in if such a sure way of *commerce* were not betwixt the  
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invisible God, and this visible world we are in, since then we should have no certain, and fixed *boundaries betwixt good, and evil*, by that unchangeable difference which the holy nature of God hath put herein, nor could we ever know that *rule of subjection*, and *relation* we stand under to him; then *heaven and earth* were shut up from correspondence together by any established rule for the same; then should the most excellent and essentiall part of man, his *immortall soul*, have no directive or comforting light as to his future state, and safe passage thereto, whilst the visible creation hath a *sun* to shine thereon; when such is the way to life as by the greatest improvements of nature it can be neither found nor followed; then should that rare structure, and workmanship of *grace* here, and of *glory* and blessedness to come, be a *terra incognita* to poor mankind, and as man only in this lower creation is capable of *moral Government* and *humane lawes*, which yet can extend no further, then their visible work, and actions, if such a blessed record were not, there should be no establishment of *laws* to the whole *inward man*, no rule of regulation to the *heart*, and this inward world, would be subject to no Government, and tho the ruined state of humane nature may be as discernable as the truth of it's existence, yet should we neither know its true *original*, and *rise*, nor any relief for the same, we might discern the truth of *invi-*

*sible adversaries*, and of some great design they have against us, as clearly as any object of sense, but we could know no security from them by an *invisible guard*, or the way how to resist such a party, then should the *work and conduct of providence* be wholly unintelligible to us, and have our eyes shut on these wonders hereof which exceed the sphere, of created understanding, if this great *luminary of the Scripture*, did not continually shine thereon which we cannot see; and not see also, that no way besides this was ever made known to recover poor mankind out of that gulf of bondage and misery he is fallen into; and as this glorious *light of divine truth* hath its *proper sphere* where it is fixed, and shines forth in the Christian Church; so the whole world beside, is a place where *horror, falshood, and impiety* does visibly reign.

4. But this must lead men of a serious spirit to a further *enquiry*, upon that *essential difference*, which is betwixt the *revealed rule of our Religion*, and *any other way*, that pretends thereto as there is betwixt *light, and darkness*, which is not founded by *positive institution* only, but in the *immutable nature* of these things themselves; and tho I design to speak more fully to this hereafter, yet should this be of highest use to strengthen the Christian faith, to look in with the serious use of reason on the whole frame of *Paganisme*, as it was in ancient times, or of *Mahometisme* in  
this

this day, where even under a sense of the law and dictates of nature such a sight were enough to expose the very name, and form of Religion, to be just matter of abhorrence, and to be the highest reproach of mankind, and thus see whither so brutish, and horrid a thing could ever claim a reception either on the *purity* of its rule, or any *internal evidence of truth*, or possible *consistence* with its self; so that to have no sense or belief of the glorious being of God, is not worse, or more dreadful, then to have the highest contumely, and affront, thus put on the *divine nature*, and which tends rather to justify *Atheism*. This enquiry were it suitably improven could not but render that *dilemma* unanswerable, either a *Christian* or of no Religion at all; either that which we enjoy according to the *Laws*, and *constitutions* of the Christian faith, or else an absolute *nullity* as to all Religion, and that no such sacred thing had a being on the earth.

INQUIRY II. But as it is not possible to hold by the truth of a *Godhead* or to have any true enjoyment of Religion, without a further and unavoidable *progress* to the *Christian Faith*; so must the first entry hereof be on the *old Testament*, and by a necessary result upon this inquiry, if the God of truth gave such a *promise of a redeemer to mankind* after the *fall*, and that on this great assurance, the faith of the ancient Church did entirely rest, that so *God has a person as the Messiah*



should come, and be anointed to that work of re-  
 deemming man, and bringing him again to God;  
 since this must be first cleared, and our faith fixed  
 on the same ere we can enter on any enjoiment of  
 the Gospel, for the faith of the new Testament,  
 is not attainable else, but in such an order and  
 settlement of our faith in the old, and hath an  
 absolute dependance on the same; wherein the  
 weight of this enquiry lyes 1. To see the truth,  
 and nature of that promise, which was the first  
 immediate object of the Churches faith to be irre-  
 vocable, and absolute, and given to be declara-  
 tive of the immutable purpose, and counsell of  
 God herein, and not dependant upon any condi-  
 tion in man. 2. How this one great promise was  
 given to be the original right, and warrant of all  
 other promises, which doe wholly center in him,  
 in whom they are yea, and amen. 3. As a pro-  
 mise of such a nature that reason must stand  
 amazed at the greatness hereof, and cry out can  
 this possibly be, yea the more deep enquiry here-  
 in must highten such an astonishment, and make  
 the soul of a Christian sinke under the thoughts  
 of such a thing that God wil in very deed bear such  
 regard to man; this being a truth of that concern  
 as it might seem strange how one day should pass  
 over men, without some fresh reviving of such  
 a reflection. 4. To see how high a value, and  
 account God put upon that one promise, by so long  
 a delay, and procrastination of the same, as a pro-  
 mise



mise worthy of the Churches waiting, and expectation of the same, for 4000. Years. 5. This enquiry must lye here, to see the first entry of the *Christian Faith* on the world in its precise time, and date, and how such a light did not shine on *Adam*, and *Eve* in the state of perfection, whilst they stood in a state of tryal upon a perfect obedience to their God, but with the falling down of that dismal night of there fall, did the glory of this light first dawn (that there might be no utter darknels in the state of *mankind* as in that of the *fallen angels*.) whereby the final condemnatory sentence on the one, and releef for the other were made known, and promulgate together, and the room of the *first Adam*, filled up with a higher glory by the *second*. 6. How this blessed light (tho with a *gradual increase*,) did never cease to shine on this world since it began to dawn, nor hath there ever ceased a peculiar people in a *Churchrelation*, who were distinct, and separate from the residue of men, whose profession was founded in the alone faith of a redeemer, so as one day hath not been, since the first entry of that promise, wherein, the *sun* did shine on the earth, when the *sun of righteousness* did not shine also by vital influences of light, and power; and where the *Churches head*, had not some part of his body here to converse with as the peculiar objects of his complaisance, and love, and did rejoice in the *habitable parts of the earth*; tho that some ages have

have had, a higher glory assigned thereto, and a larger extent of the Church; yet would he not restrict the *ingathering of his elect* to any special periods of time; or let each age want a share of this glory, and of a seed to be as *salt to the earth*. 7. But this *enquiry* goes further, to see these measures of *evidence*, and divine condescendence, which was given to support the faith of the ancient Church, on that great promise even by an *ocular discovery*, to the outward sense, as in the whole frame and successive course of the *legal sacrifices*, and these numerous *figures*, and *types* in that long preparatory service; wherein he did not let his people feed on *ashes*, *naked shadows*, and where nothing was inept or useless, but was expressly *significative*, of that highest *mystery of Christ*, and could possibly bear no other sense, or intent; and since the whole stress of the *Christian Faith* dyes upon this *one promise*, or what can make the state of man valuable, in any true enjoyment of his life here, its on this *head* should be sett the first settlement of our faith; for I know no relief, but in a *promised redeemer*, and if it were not for the *old Testament*, I could not possibly be a *Christian*; if the morning, and growing light, of that glorious *mystery*, had not gone before its *meridian hight*, and as a clear conduct to the next step, I shall enter on

A III. INQUIRY, to know that this *fundamental promise of a redeemer coming to the world*  
 is as

is assuredly made good, and is no more a matter of faith, but of sense, that its sure our eyes see such a day, and long expected period of time, and can be no dark or doubtful thing now to be a Christian, but may enter on its profession in the open light; but to clear how with the same evidence of the certainty of the promise, we may see its performance also, and if we be sure of the one that it is not possible to be in question about the other, is thus visible. 1. Because we must then part with the *old Testament*, and cease to credit its divinity, and no comfort could be from the same; if it had yet failed in this great event, and what is the main intent thereof for if the *promised Messias* were yet to come, I could then look for none, since all these *proper circumstances*, which are so expressly foretold, whereby to know and discern him, must be wholly made void, and an utter nullity should be in that faith. 2. Because I could not possibly look for the accomplishment of that promise, according to the whole tenor of the *old Testament*, in another way then what we have hereof in the revelation of the *Gospel*; yea were it supposable that the *Messias* were yet to come; it is sure I could only look and expect for his acting the same part and in the same appearance. 3. Let us but compare the *antient creed* of the Church herein, with that which is ours, now under the dispensation of the *Gospel*, and see whither they be not entirely ~~on~~ in substance, and

and center in the same redeemer, with this variation only, that the one was on the credit and assurance of what was promised, and the other on the certainty of its accomplishment, so as that may be as applicable, to *Moses*, *Isaia*, and *Daniel* with other of the Prophets, as to the *Evangelists*, what is spoke by *John Chap. 20: v. 31*. But these are written that ye might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; and that believing you might have life through his name; where we may see there could be no humane contrivance, in this joint concurring for the same end, and by the same spirit: but yet more specially lyes the weight of this enquiry, to see, 1. how the most solemn times of the old Testament was still a waiting, and expecting time, and that their highest enjoiments, lay in hope of that glory to be revealed in after ages, when the seal should be taken off that great Prophecy, then sealed up, and how the whole dispensation of that time was preparatory, and as a prelude to that great design of grace, which was to be brought forth. 2. How the breaking up of Gospel, and its first entry on the world, had its precise time, and date, as that which was so absolutely necessary, for a more clear settling of the Christian Faith, this being a master of fact, and of the highest import that ever was, and was an external object of Sense, in the view of the World, which laid an inevitable constraint, on the whole Christian Church, then to have it kept

kept clear, and under the most exact and punctual circumstances. 3. As *Israels* coming out of *Egypt* in a typical respect, was a night, and time of such great observation, and that the Lord did put hereon, so special a weight, with respect to the punctual and precise time hereof; so was this in a more eminent way, to be matter of highest regard, when and in what time, the great universal good, and blessing of mankind, our blessed redeemer, was revealed unto the World, which should begin a new week, and that solemn Epocha, whence wee reckon the Churches entry on the highest glory of time, and on a new state.

4. Hereon hath that solemn observation of the first day of the week, as the Lords day both its title, and right; tho it might seem not possible this could ever come under forgetfulness when it was thus fixed. upon the highest certainty, and precise time, both of the sufferings, and resurrection, of the Lord, in matter of fact; as that day and time was, which had a glory put thereon, that none else could possibly claim, and no time ever since that glas, sett up to their creation, was like unto this, yea which was wholly impossible to fix the Christian Church on the observation hereof otherways, but that this was so publick and famous in the view of the world, and had so great a weight on the primitive Christians, then, when these morning stars sung together, and the Sons of God shouted for joy, at the first entry of this

this *new World*, and it may be specially remarkable, that our Lord did the less inforce the same in an *authoritative way*, both to try and trust the love of his people herein, that what he had done for them, put so strong an enforcement and imposition, to a frequent and solemn remembrance of this blessed day from internal motives; and tho its divine authority be clear, yet the less is of *positive institution* this way, the more strengthening might it be to our *faith*, and more excitement also for our *love* herein, were it seriously considered, 5. And of what weight should this *enquiry* be still on mens spirits, that our hope leans novv no more on a *promise*, on which the Saints of old did both live and die, when this makes so essential a change in the Christian Faith, that vvhhat ane *Abraham* and *Moses* was saved by cannot possibly save us, to *beleeve in a Redeemer to come*, which would now be absolutely *mortall*, nay not in *generall terms* to beleeve that he is come, but to knowv and be sure, that *this is he whom the Father sealed*, and sent unto the *World*, and he alone who in the dayes of *Tiberius*, and *Pontius Pilate* suffered at *Jerusalem*.

A IV. INQUIRY, which suitably followes here, is to look in upon the *glory of that time under the new Testament*, vvhich vvas peculiarly reserved thereto; and on these *publick declarative signs* to the *World*, whereby our *Redeemer was declared to be the Son of God*, with power,  
and

and by the *spirit of Holiness*, so as it may be said the Lord did then *set up Signs and Wonders to this very day*, with a more eminent lustre then these at the Churches outgoing from *Egypt*; but since in the *times* we live in, you may find more to shake and stagger then to strengthen your spirit in the way of truth, when it is not in an ordinarie degree, that a *reall Apostacy* may be seen from the *Christian Faith* this day in the *Reformed Churches*, whilst that choice spirit of the *Bereans* seems rarely to be found in the earth, I shall touch but a little this *great subject* in some instances, wherein our *blest Redeemer* after his *Ascension* hath still made himself *visible* before the World in the glory of his divine Power, and are of such kind, as no distance of time can take off that irresistible evidence of the same from a serious spirit, as if they were still present.

1. That tho in his *bodily presence*, since he left the World, he is no *object* any more of humane sense, yet hath he been no less *visible* in his goings forth to *conquer and establish a Kingdom to himself out of all Nations, Tongues and Languages*, even to the utmost parts of the earth; and since I know you can improve some *Reflections* on his Head, beyond what I can speak thereon, I shall the more briefly point at a few. 1. That it is known and sure, how most of the habitable World besides *Judaea*, was in times past *Pagan*, and a place of *horror and darkness*, and these parts



we now live in were once the *dark places of the earth*, full of the *Habitations of Cruelty*, where our *Ancestors* of whom we are come, did Sacrifice to the *Gods of the Heathens*. 2. It is evident and undeniable in the matter of *Fact*, that within less then *sixty Years* after the *Ascension of the Lord*, the visible extent of the *Christian Church* among the Nations which had been then *Heathen*, did exceed what it is this day; and since any *extraordinary effect* when it comes in our sight, should cause a deep Inquiry upon the *cause* hereof, is not this a matter of the highest concern, that ever was, even in the present day to be taken up with that made then so stupendious a change on the face of mankind, and was as the bringing forth of a new World. 3. And here is it possible to question, that this wonderful thing which did so visibly then change the whole face of the earth, was by the alone *evidence and vertue of Sacred Truth*, and the *pure Revelation of Christ* in the *Mystery of his Death and Sufferings*, wherein no humane Power could boast that their *Arm or Sword* did bring this about; as I know it will be sweet and convincing thus to see under what influence, the *Christian Church* was both planted and propogate in the earth and most savage parts thereof, so that whatever respect *Princes* and visible Powers have given to the *Kingdom of Christ*, yet is it fully demonstrable that its *true interest and conquest* was never beholden to humane assistance.

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stance, or that any temporal inducements made way thereto, but when the World begun to smile most in the *primitive times*, then also did the Glory and Lustre of the Christian Religion begin to darken, and decline. 4. As it was surely reserved to the *Gospel State of the Church*, to be the *Theater of the greatest Wonders both of Providence, and Grace*, beyond all that had been known to the World before, and that in the times of the *New Testament*, these great things which should be matter of highest observation, and out of the ordinarie road of Gods dealing with his Church then was to be expected, so you can see with full evidence, that this *great and extraordinary appearance of God unto men*, had been never known on the earth before, or any such outgoing of his Power since the beginning of time, which was only reserved to follow the day of *Christ*, and his *Ascension*, as the first entry of that *glorious Scene*, which was to be acted under the *Gospel*. 5. And here also this *Reflection* is unavoidable, how the *God of this World* was not easily put off his *visible Throne*, which he had so long kept over the Nations, but the last struggle of these *infernal spirits* ere they were cast down was then very strong, and put forth to the utmost, who yet were made to fall before the *Divinity of our Redeemer* in such a manner, as the whole frame of *Paganism* was then raz'd and extinct, and their Gods after whom the earth had

for so many ages wondred; for when you peruse the *Records of the first times*, you can see the enmity and rage of the World against Sacred Truth, was never before railed to such a prodigious height, as was then aloft upon the first display of the Gospel.

2. But it is yet a further *Inquiry* should be made on this *Head*, to see not only the *outgoings of the Lord Jesus in the Glory of his Power since his Ascension*, for setting up his *visible Kingdom* in the World, and extent of the Christian Profession, but in the *reality of that vital influence on the souls of men*, with so great and wonderful a change thus made on them from the residue of mankind. This, I doubt not, will be a subject of great thoughts and *reflection* to you, and should be a matter of higher concern to any of a serious spirit, than the temporal interest and transactions, which are about the greatest Kingdoms on the earth. 1. To see how no reality in nature, or the most visible objects of sense, can be more sure, than that under the times of the *New Testament*, there hath been *innumerable examples of the truth and power of Holiness*, successively from one age to another, in whom it might be no more discernable, that they walked in the virtue and power of a *humane soul*, than that they did truly walk before men in the *light and power of Christianity*, and under that visible influence of *inward Grace*, as all might see to be above the possi-

possibility of *natural causes*. 2. If this were more deeply search'd into, to see what does essentially belong to the *frame and constitution of one real Christian*, and what a marvelous Power must be put forth herein, it could not but be in another manner affecting, and afford a *Seall to the Christian Faith*, as does exceed the greatest *external Miracles*; when it's sure one example of such, who is truly *converted by grace*, and made partaker of the *Divine nature*, is so stupendious a work as does far exceed both the power and comprehension of *Angels*, yea that the *Glory of the Godhead* does more eminently shine forth in the *first frame*, in the *conduct*, and *persuing of one Christian*, then either in the *first frame of man* in his state of perfection, or of the *illuminate Angels*, since this is to make *Saints of Sinners*, to turn such from a state of enmity, and inbred opposition to the Holy God to be Lovers of him, and subdue their souls in that manner, as with inward delight can make them part with what was their predominant and endeared Interest, and what hath been as their right hand and eye. This is one of the great discoveries of the *Gospel*. to let us see how one *converted Christian* is a higher demonstration of the *Christian Faith*, then a *thousand ordinarie Professors* hereof, and may fully silence such a *Question*, why it is, that the *Saints are not more numerous in the World*, comparatively with the great bulk of mankind, yea with these

who go under the Christian Profession, when it might be rather just matter of wonder to see that such *numerous Examples* yet are to be found of this kind in the earth, of whom each, is *one of the greatest of the Works of God*, and infinitely becoming the exceeding greatness of his Power put forth herein; yea are such *Examples*, where the Truth and Excellency of *Grace* does in any eminency shine forth, as may justly supply the Room of *Miracles*, which were given in the *first times* to be confirming to the *Christian Faith*; that these hath assuredly been, and I hope are this day not a few, who doe with desire choise to preferre their *Services for God*, to the greatest comforts & enjoyments of this earth, and are helped not only to keep ground, but gain, under such *conflicts and assaults* in their spiritual course, as go above the *possibility of nature* to withstand.

3. And what a wonder may one Christian be, who does converse with God here on the earth, both to himself and others, who hath such near enjoyments of the *divine presence*, hath such astonishing hopes, hath ever the *Elect Angels* to be both their guard and observers; and tho the *Saints above* return no more to converse with us, yet is it not questionable, but that they have the same prospect of the *outgoings of providence towards the Saints yet militant*, & as to their *services, trialls, and victories*, which the *Angels* have to whom they are *now made equal*, and in the same state

state of perfection ; and that they know the *return* of their prayers in behalfe of such who are on the earth, for whom they had wrestled with God whilst they were upon it ; yea that the *joy which is in Heaven, and in the presence of the Angels*, on the conversion of sinners respects the whole Church triumphant ; and I humbly judge even in that sense may the intent of that Scripture be understood *Hebr. 12: 1. as to such a cloud of Witnesses &c.*

3. Let me referr you to one great instance also, wherein our Redeemer hath in ane eminent way made himself visible before the World since his *Ascension*, which is in the greatness of that *seall of Martyrdom*, where you may see with joy and admiration that as he did alott the highest discoveries of his love unto lost man to the day of the Gospel, so did he reserve unto these times, the highest Testimony and triall of the Love of Mankind to him. This is a great Subject, tho it be easily past without a suitable weight and impression of the same, how high an interest this hath in the Christian Faith ; wherein 1. the truth of such a wonderful seall in the matter of fact is not possible to question. 2. And that it's sure there was no personated shew in these unexpressible sufferings of these Saints for Christ, nor did the World in such a persecuting work, through most of the times of the *New Testament* conflict with a shadow herein ; and if a reall Miracle be such as

exceed the sphere and possibility of nature; it  
 hath thus the most full and undeniable evidence;  
 nor were it possible that the *most excellent*  
*of the earth* should upon choice act such a  
 part of embracing death under the greatest  
 torments, when their life and the enjoyments  
 of time was set before them, if they had not  
 been acted by a *Divine Spirit*, and knew these un-  
 expressible comforts and joy, which was then  
 given in for their support, and matter of present  
 sense, and feeling, to be no illusion of mind here-  
 in. 3 It is on this *Head* you can see and com-  
 pare what a difference was betwixt the *Legal Sa-*  
*crifices under the Old Testament*, which were fi-  
 gurative and typical, and these *freewill offerings*  
*and oblations of love by Martyrdom* under the  
 Gospel, which were offered up as a publick  
*confirmatory Seall to the Divinity of Christ*, and  
 that the *desire of all Nations* was now come; how  
 the one did in a mystery, and under a vaile con-  
 firm the Churches Faith of a *Redeemer to come*,  
 the other with the highest evidence of power did  
 attest his being come, and *seall this Testimony*  
*with their Blood*, the one from a temporary and  
*positive Institution*, the other not only under a  
 constraint of light, but an *imposition of love*, by  
*the Spirit of Christ*, and of *Glory resting on them*,  
 was thus offered up, and as to the *quality* of these  
 Sacrifices: how great a difference was herein?  
 the one only of *Beasts*, wherein the Lord would  
 admit

admit no humane Sacrifice to be *typical*, but now after the great *propitiation* was offered up, these *Sacrifices of Love* was not only of *men*, but of the most excellent of *humane* race, who in purity and holiness were the greatest ornament of the earth in their day, the *number* whereof since the Ascension of Christ, is of that extent as can be only known by him who counts the number of the Stars, so innumerable have they been; yea as to the *expende* and allowance of so high a service, men can not exercise reason, and not see it did not only answer but exceed the measure of their sufferings, and how these *Flames of Love* in which they were offered, was more prevalent then thele of the *Fire*. 4. And is it not matter of sweet *Reflection* herein, that as the *incomprehensible Love of God* unto man is the *admiration of the elect Angels*, so this illustrious testimony of *humane Love unto God*, is not only made conspicuous to them, but is both the foile and torment of the *Powers of Darknes*, to see such a triumph of the Power of Grace amongst *men* here on the earth made visible; wherein my soull desires to rejoyce that as our *blest Head* hath assigned such a measure of his *sufferings*, as a *testimony to the truth to be filled up* by his People, under the times of the *New Testament*, and to take a higher tryall of the *love of mankind* herein to him, then he would take even of the love of the *blessed Angels*, so hath this *Testimony* with the clearest and undeniable evidence been made known.

But



But there is a 4. *special Instance* of the outgoings of our Redeemer in a visible discovery of himself to the World since his Ascension, which is in the successive course of the Gospel amongst the Nations, and these remarkable Periods of the rising and setting of this blessed light on different places of the earth; on which a few things would speak for your further clearing herein.

1. That it is undeniable, the *Gentiles* have their appointed times, which must be fulfilled, Luke 21: v. 24. wherein the *fulneß* thereof must be brought in Rom. 11: 25. which Scriptures bear expressly the same intent, but it's now many ages, since these *times of the Gentiles* hath been fulfilled both in *Asia* and *Africa*, where the Gospel in its course as the Sun, hath had its first upbreking, then in the *East*, and its progress to the *West* and *Northern Parts of the Earth*. 2. That it is clear, these *times of the Gentiles*, and the *fulneß* thereof, is to be only understood in a *distinct and separate State* from the *Jews*, so that as the *Jewish Church* once had their proper *times* allotted them in a separate state from the whole residue of the World, so have the *Gentiles* had their *times under the New Testament*, peculiar to them only; and the Spirit of God hath there expressly shewed, that this great Revolution in the incalling of the *Jews* to the Christian Faith, is not to be expected until these *times* be once accomplish'd, when there shall be then no more distinguishing names of



*Jew and Gentile*, and no proper interest owned by them in a divided way as formerly, but that the Lord shall be one, and his name one, in that blessed frame of his *universal Kingdom*; it's in the faith hereof my soul does rest. 3. How far these *sett times of the Gentiles*, and of the coming in of the *fulneß* thereof, be accomplisht, will in due time be disclosed, and with humble sobriety we must judge hereof, but it may be so far evident, that then some singular withdrawing of the Spirit of God in the Power of the Gospel will be discernable from the *Gentile Church*, with the shutting up of these times, and a very low ebb, & great darknels on the whole *Western Churches*, before the rising again of the Glory of that Light, and return of the *Sun* to the *East* again; and how it stands now with the publick State of the *Gentile Churches* any where, you can more fitly judge and discern.

There is a V. INQ: yet for a more full settlement in the *Christian Faith*, that I would seriously commend, which is on the *whole frame and nature of that pure and excellent Religion we profess*, and the *intrinsic* perfections thereof; which beside the *Authority of divine Institution*, you may see founded in the *immutable nature and essence of the same*, and thus have your soul rais'd to admire and rejoyce in that God, whose *Excellencies* are with that evidence herein display'd, as it is not possible for men to be more blest in the earth, then

then in this way. It is here I may say, hath my spirit been oft drawn forth to see with admiration the *Divinity and Perfections of the Moral Part of our Religion*, so that if men would see in a true mirror what the *Holy invisible God is like in his blessed Resemblance*, lo here is it clearly presented to them, and since any discovery of such a *Light*, I know you prefer much above the *Light of the Sun* on this earth, as that alone which renders the state of man to be desirable; I would touch this a little as may afford some reflections on so great a *Head*, which may be, in the very notion thereof, rarely the subject of mens thoughts. 1. That which is of the highest concern in the *first place*, to fix your spirit on, is to see in what manner the great design of the *Gospel*, for the saving of lost man is layd, in that mystery of the *Humiliation and Sufferings of our Redeemer*, and how this way the *Majesty of God* would take satisfaction to himself; and his infinite Justice, by himself, which otherwise was not attainable; I know that to look in an ordinarie manner hereon, might be ready to shake your spirit with astonishment, that the *Divine Majesty* should ascribe to himself such an *abasement*, as to join the *humane nature in an union with the Deity*, yea thus to be exposed to the highest ignominy of sufferings, that could possibly be allotted to the most *Criminal* amongst men. but it's in such a choise enquiry you will find your establishment and admiration

grow

grow together, and thus have a share in the same exercise of the *Angels* on this subject, who look hereon with joy and wondring. 2. You must see herewith also, how of such a nature is this blessed Religion you enjoy, as can never be known or enjoyed by men until it be enlivened from Heaven, or be possibly taken up or understood in a natural way, as humane sciences are, but must have another teacher than men, and a faculty and power supernatural, to know and discern the things of God herein; yea how in its whole constitution it is made up of these great Excellencies of Light and Life, which do inseparably meet here; whole evidence lyes in seeing, and not in report or a naked testimony to the ear, but is in the same manner as the Sun is made known by its own beams and light; and it were indeed sad, if the Sun of Righteousness did not this day shine with as full evidence to men in this Lower Orb of the Gospel, as the Meridian Daylight is to our natural sense, to let us see both the greatness and security of our hope, yea that we are designed for an Eternal State, & must therefore seek after a Blessedness as will last as long as our immortal souls that cannot perish. 3. But this will necessarily carry your thoughts further, to see how the Christian Faith does not only with full evidence manifest it self by its own Light, but does the more brightly appear by the opposition of darkness, and of every false way and pretence of Religion, and how the

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*essential Differences betwixt the same* are as fully e-  
 vident and visible, as is betwixt the day and  
 night, betwixt truth and falshood, which are  
 founded in the immutable nature of these things  
 themselves; and how *the way of truth* hath surely  
 that *vital air and fragrancy* herewith, and such  
 a *native lustre*, as is no more possible for *humane*  
*art and invention* to represent, then it were to  
 bear draw a living man on a broad, or for one to draw  
 forth the *natural sent of a Violet or Rose*. 4. It is  
 here also you will find it specially strengthening to  
 see the *nature of these services*, which belong to  
 the *Christian Faith*, how here is nothing that is  
*servile*, or to affright any to come under such a  
 blessed yoke, which in its whole *constitution* is so  
 full of a Holy sweetness to allure, and impleth  
 no *Law of Bondage* on the spirits of men, but  
 what hath inward motives to render it both ealy  
 and comforting, does prescribe no duty to be a  
 task, and no service but from love, and where  
 the *Moral Law* is purely *Evangelick*, and admi-  
 nistred to us in the *Hands of a Mediator*, yea of  
 such a *nature* is the whole obedience and services  
 of the *Christian Faith*, as you may clearly see that  
 duty on the *matter*, is not enough, where there  
 is not a suitableness thereto in the *manner* of fol-  
 lowing the same, that the *leading motives and*  
*principles* be purely for God; nor can the way of  
 his service be truly followed until his revealed  
*Law* have an internal efficacy on mens soull, and  
 the

the *Moral Rule of Gospel Obedience* be turned into living and inward principles; this is a *Reflection* I should commend much to your thoughts, that hath such irresistible evidence therewith for your establishment in the truth, to see, how that blest way, which God hath established to bring man again to himself, is such as no length in any external part, or the *outworks* hereof can bear weight, if there be not a *vital influence* on the soull, nor does its interest ever subsist in the World by *humane Power or Authority*, but by an *internal establishment* of the same from its own evidence on the spirits of men. 5. It is here you may see likewise, how the whole *Constitutions of the Christian Faith* are such, as its *highest Glory and Triumph* here on the earth, is still most conspicuous in the *darkest night of Affliction and Trouble*, and in the most remarkable depths thereof; this is surely a great discovery, and a strange riddle to nature, which stands in an express opposition to the universal sence of mankind, how this way the Lord does put the highest honor on men here on the earth, in the *passive valour of Christianity*, yea thus puts the most distinguishing marks of respect on his *choicest Favourites*;

But there is a VI. INQUIRY, I must further direct you to without which no evidences of the truth, can be truly effectual on your soull; which is on that *wonderful part of Christianity*, that  
lyes

lies in the truth of *inward experience*, and is the *very life and soull of our Religion*. The greatness of such a *Subject* makes it more difficult to speak hereon, now in a short *Epistolary Discourse*, but it shall be in as few words as is possible, only to point at such things as may tend to more clear and solid impressions of this *Mystery*, and make way for your own search and tryall of the same; and I hope I may say they are things, which have not been taken on report. or have found it easy to be satisfied herein, as to a full acquiescence in the truth and assurance thereof; but it's to a few *special ends* I would refer your serious improvement of this *great Inquiry*.

1. For this end that a clear *notion and Idea* of *spiritual experience of the things of God*, may be more deeply settled on your spirit, and how in these respects it is to be understood: 1. that God hath directed his *Sacred Truth* unto men not only for *trust*; but for *tryall*, which is a *tryall* of that nature, & stated on so great and wonderful things, that the whole *vital part* of Religion should be a strange and dark thing until you be once entred hereon; they are *blest* who beleeve and have not yet seen what relates to the *State of Glory above*, but they can never be blest who do not see, as well as beleeve what belongs to the *life and enjoyments of Grace withintime*, in the truth of *inward experience*. 2. It is here must be understood the first *Acquaintance of men with the Spirit of God*; which

which is an *acquaintance* of that concern, as the Lord hath laid over the weight of his peoples spiritual joy, refreshment, and support, whilst they are within time, on the same; and is the first *entry on converse with spirits*, and with *God, the Father of spirits*, which shall be *eternal*. 3. It is such, as hath a distinct *evidence* from any *moral influence* by the Word or *light* to the judgment; and is the proper object of spiritual sense, which no *humane power*, or *Angels* can impart, but God hath reserved only to himself, who can only make his *own love known* to the soul, and no report, or testimony of men can doe. 4. It is hereby Christians enter on *possession in some degree of divine truth*, and these great things promised, as a *earnest in hand*, to assure them that *the rest shall not faill* tho it adds no security to the truth of the promise, but for a more abounding assurance to such who receive the same. 5. Tho here be a *common, and joint interest* amongst Christians, yet must each have his *proper, and distinct part* in the truth of *inward experience*, which is his *peculiar interest and talent*, and it's sure nothing does more work on mens souls; and afford more sweet thoughts then what this way is made there own, to know in themselves the *internal demonstrations* of the truth they profess, in the *power and vertue* thereof; and to know what great things hath passed between God and their own soul, and what remarkable times hath gone over

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them,



them, and special remarks herein of divine conduct, and his immediate appearance, in the course of their life. 6. It is of that *kind* as none possibly can take on trust, from the testimony of others, or will satisfy without personal tryall, tho this be more known to such who *by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil* *Hebr. 5: 14.* 7. But whatever singular use is hereby to the support of our Faith, yet are they not the grounds thereof; since these are only, what God hath *spoke in his word*, and not what he hath *done in his work*; tho they are at a great loss who have begun late to observe the same: it is true the greatest *talent*, which is by *inward observation*, and *experiments* which have been most deeply affecting in the present time; does not abide in the same *sense*, and *feeling*, and may ly as a *dead stock* upon a Christians hand, without fresh, and immediate supplies; yet are they still the same in the truth thereof, and does ever evidence, how far the enjoiment of grace, and of a spiritual estate does exceed the greatest enjoiments of nature. 8. This also must be understood not only by the testimony of inward sense, but what comes under the most *exact*, and *judicious tryall*, as to the principles it leans on, without which, there could be no true enjoiment of the same, if they were not as fully satisfied of holding their *experience by right*, *as in possession*, and that these great things are no shadowes or ap-



pearances, but what is of the highest *truth*, *sub-*  
*stance*, and *reality*. 9. It is sure that God is not  
 known in the earth, or enjoyed in *truth*, but in  
 the *light of inward evidence* and *experience*, ex-  
 cept in such a manner ~~as~~ *Balaam*, to see him but  
 not near; but not in the *knowledge of converse*,  
 and *fellowship* with that *God*, whom they profess  
 to know, or what it is to have their soul *inward*,  
 and *familiar* with him, in the experience of such  
 a thing. 10. It is by *inward experience* upon the  
 souls of men, that God doeth in a more special way  
*secure*, and *preserve*, that *sacred record of his truth*  
 in the World, then by *humane Lawes*, or *authori-*  
*ty*; by ane *internal* conforming of the spirits of his  
 people, to his revealed truth, whereby the inward  
 man becomes as a *repository* thereof, for when men  
 once become Christians in truth, they are then the  
*declared Epistle of Christ* by ane indissoluble union  
 of the truth, and their souls together. I shall but  
 add, that the *experimental part of Religion* is not  
 perfected here, but within a little, there will be ane  
 entrance on ane eternity of *experience* of what once  
 with admiration, and desire, was hoped for, and  
 the enjoyment of that state above will be no *object*  
 of *Faith*, but of *sense* and *purely experimental*.

A Second Intent of this Inquiry, should be to  
 clear, how the enjoyment of one Christian in the  
 way of *experience*, may be no *measure*, or *rule* to  
 others in the tryall of their state, upon these  
 grounds. 1. That the least reall evidence of the

*Sanctifying virtue of the truth*, bears witness to the truth of a *new life*, and of *spiritual sense*, and discerning herewith, as a *few grapes* does difference between a *vine*, and a *bramble*. 2. Because the reall Work of God, may be long without the witness thereof, and the first giving of the *new life*, and a *discerning* of the same, are distinct acts of the spirit, which doe rarely go together, soe to know when the *pulse* of this *life* does begin first to beat. 3. As there are different *sizes*, and growth amongst the Saints within time; so doe the *talent of experience* and *inward observation* much differ in the state of some, in respect of others; and does answer to higher *conflicts* and *faults* in a Christians warefare, and higher *improvements* of grace herein; whence it is that *patience brings forth experience*, and as it hath a great *room*, and service for God; beyond other graces of the spirit, so hath it a great income of reward, by the most rare, and enriching *experience* of a Christians life; thence is it that the *highest form of Christians* and of the choicest spirit, has been put to a higher exercise thereof, then others, and made to be a more public blessing by example herein to their Generation. 4. It is clear, the *experimental part* of Christianity may have respect to some *special times*, and *Periods of mens life*, so as one day may be more memorable, then as they have ever known before, yea to such times, when they are put to  
 highe

higher service in the tryall of their Faith, and led unto paths of providence, that might seem untrodden, which hath been usually a time of great observation as to a higher light, and evidence on the experimental tryall of Religion. 5. This different measure hath respect also, to the first entry of Christians on some very dark paths of providence, when the Lord is to lead, and encline them into a wilderness, by giving in assurance with a double measure on their souls, like *Elijahs call to arise, and eat*, and *Josephs dream twice given*, when his conflicts, and tryalls were to be doubled upon him; yea this may be also on this ground, as it is peculiar to some Christians above others to be kept more close on such a Scent, in that rare exercise to discern the workings of God on their soull, and to try the certainty hereof from the natural work of their own Spirit; and who may be more exact then others, to lay up, and record the same, and not lose the least fragment of such assistances to their Faith.

3. This Inquiry should be of special use likewise to know what great things these are, to which, the experimental part of Christianity does relate, wherein they of the lowest sise of Christians have a common, and joint interest whatever difference be in the degree; but it is a very short touch I can here give on so great a subject and on some few Heads.

1. The translation, and entry of a Christian  
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unto a new state, and world, here in the earth; is one of the greatest things of experience (tho it hath not a like clear evidence, nor the precise time, and entry can be in the same manner known) for men to know so marvelous a change in themselves, and that here is no illusion or dream, and how it is sure this was never told to mankind but in the Bible, which none ever did foresee, or project to themselves; yea which in the very notion thereof, was once a *terra incognita* to them; and could have no possible rise from nature whose proper work is to overcome nature. I know this may seeme astonishing, and not easie for many to bear, that professed Christians may have the same need to be converted to Christianity that *Pagans* have, or perish, that the letter of the word only, or any length in external duties can save none, who know nothing of internal evidence, or the spiritual Powers of Christianity.

2. It does relate to this Head, to know that God and his People here in the World, are no strangers to other in the truth, and enjoyment of communion with him, for as this is an essential part of our Faith, and one of the most sure, and established constitutions of our Religion, by an unalterable rule, so is it matter of undoubted enjoyment, without which a Christians course, and passage through time were unpassible; it is true this is so great a thing as may make the most experienced Christian to be a wonder to himself, and is not a subject of ordinary thoughts.

3. To

3. To this belongs also the *truth*; and enjoyment of *supernatural comforts here on the earth* such as *peace immediatly from God, and the joys of the Holy Ghost*, which can have no possible rise from nature, and was never known to men, but on this *tryall of experience*, that such a thing is sure, with respect unto which the *highest experiments of nature* are low, and of mean concern; yea which are comforts of that kind, as can be only known by its contrary, and hath been still more ouweing to the *foreſt conflicts*, then to the *sweetest calm of a Christians life*, and such as the elect Angels did never know or partake of.

4. The *prevalency of prayer with God*, and to know with assured evidence both the *acceptance hereof in Heaven*, and the *returns thereof upon the earth*, is also one of these great things of *experience*, and can never be known else as a subject of contemplation only, which hath been direct of the Lord as a prescript for such ones where no humane wisdom or power could possibly answer, and is not bounded by the most desperate case, which would seem to shut out all hope and encouragement. But as to this I must say how little seems that part of our Religion, tho one of the most wonderful parts thereof to be improven in that manner now as in former times, and in the most extraordinary exigences which Christians have been in, yea how low a trade is it which by most this day is carried on, in so marvelous a way

as this, which the Lord hath established betwixt *heaven and earth*, and hath such immediate correspondence with the whole *inward life*, and *virtalls of Christianity*, to preserve and strengthen the same.

*A 5. Head* on this Subject to be matter of great thoughts and *reflection* is this, that here on the earth there is such a thing to be enjoyed in the truth and certainty of *experience*, as an *earnest and seal of the Spirit of God* 2 Corinth 1: 22. *who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts* Ephes. 1: 13. *in whom also after that ye beleevd, ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance* &c. 2 Corinth. 5: 5. *now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit.* I know there hath been much inquiry on this Subject, as to a clear *sence*, and judgment thereof, both by *Schoolmen*, and *Practical Writers*, tho it is such a thing as must needs be a strange, and dark riddle where the *Spirit of God* is not the *Interpreter*; and some near intercourse with this great teacher, that in his *light we may see light*; but that it is surely promised of God, and could never have entred on mens thoughts, if it were not purely a divine Revelation, none will offer to question; and that the experience of the same in all times of the Church, hath no less tendency to confirm and seal the truth of Christianity, then

then it hath to confirm a Christians state; but though I doubt not your acquaintance herewith is beyond many, yet this beeing a truth of such high concern, so far as I have attained, I would offer some light hereon, wherein my soul hath found *rest and settlement*, as to a clear sence and conception of the same. 1. That how rare soever the *experience* of this may be this day, yet is it not the peculiar priviledge of some *few, select, and eminent Christians*, or what God does rarely impart and on some singular account to his people, but is the settled priviledge of all who are *led by the Spirit*, and under his conduct. 2. This is *ane experiment of the Christian Faith*, which no humane testimony or *vocal evidence* can express, that which is *inward*, and a secret betwixt God and the soul, or what *taste that hidden Manna* hath Rev. 2: 17. *which none knowes but he that enjoys the same*; for this is not the *promise*, which is given to be the *object of our Faith*, but is the *Seal of the Spirit of promise*, and the *proper object of spiritual sense*; it is an internal work which goes above words, and such as God alone can impart, who only can reveal his own love to the soul, and *Shed abroad the sence hereof*, and hath reserved this to himself; it is that also which gives a *distinct evidence* from any moral influence of the word, tho it can never be disjoined, and divided from the same, but is such *ane internal application hereof*, as puts their souls to rest and quiet



thereon. 3. It is here must be understood a more *near and solemn approach of God*, and some *higher enjoiment of Spiritual Sense*, then is usually known which will make such a time remarkable, and sweet to a Christians after remembrance, the some in, a more extraordinary way, and higher degree, may have this imparted then others, as the tryall of their Faith hath been more heightned, and hath attained to higher actings of grace under the same, according to that settled *Connection Isay 57: 12.* I doubt not, there may be high pretences to this *Seall and earnest*, who know little what in the *way and order of grace* is required to prepare, and qualifie for the same, but except the *settled constitutions* of the Gospel, should be changed for their sake; it is then sure that God did never *seall the comforts of his Spirit*, or his respects and approving testimony on such, who are of an untender, unhumbl'd, and vindictive spirit, and is no more possible, then as *Job 18: 4.* *That the earth should be forsaken for them, and the rock removed out of its place.* 4. It is true this is more clearly understood by such, who by *reason of use, have their senses exercised both to discern good, and evill Hebrews 5: 14.* and have thus attained a more deep, and judicious reflection, for the tryall of the same, since this is usually one of the most searching exercises of a Christian, to discern the *voice of the Spirit of God*, and know the same, from that of a *Stranger*, and  
to come



to come to the light herein, to see that such a *seall*,  
 or any rare enjoiments of that kind, are assuredly  
 from God, and wrought in him *John 3: 21*. It is  
 clear also how, many *sharp conflicts*, and a *botter*  
*ware fare* allotted to some of the Saints, then o-  
 thers, under griefs, troubles, and oppositions in  
 their Christian course, hath made way at so dear a  
 rate for their acquaintance with the same, so as  
 the gradual difference, in the truth of this expe-  
 riment, may be strange, and marvelous, and  
 cause fear to impart the same, nor be ever known  
 within time. 5. Tho it is sure, that all who are  
 entred in a *reconciled state with God*, must be *sea-*  
*led by the Spirit*, yet is not this to be understood  
 as the ordinar food, and dyet of a Christian, but  
 as some more special *restorative*, and *cordial*, so  
 as one enjoiment of this kind, hath been some-  
 times so remarkable, that through the whole  
 course of a Christians life after, it hath been a con-  
 tinued strenthning to their Faith; yet is it no rare  
 thing to these who are kepted in a more near in-  
 timacy of converse with God, to whom, the truth  
 of this *seall* not once, but in innumerable times,  
 hath been known, who, on the other hand does  
 know also, how long, and sensible restraint of  
 this great enjoiment may be, when the choifest  
 promises of the Word, can afford no comfort,  
 but when the *premises are clear*, the *conclusion is*  
*oft suspended through hid jealousies*, and *legall*  
*fears of the spirit of bondage*. 6. It is sure this  
 blessed

*bleſſed ſeall* lyes here alſo. in ſome ſpecial *directiv*  
*work of the Spirit of God*, to make uſe of *light*, in  
*particular caſes with aſſurance*, and *quiet of mind*,  
 and in *ſealing inſtruction* with that *evidence*, and  
*power on the ſoull*, as leaves ſuch a *print and im-*  
*preſſion thereon* as the *ſeall* leaves on the *wax*,  
 this can be no ſtrange, or unknown thing to theſe  
 who in a cloſe adherence, to Scripture light hath  
 been ſpecially tender to try the ſame thereby, and  
 under a juſt horror, and dread of *Enthuſiaſmi*  
 or the ſmalleſt daſſhing on ſuch a *rock*. 7. But  
 it is ſpecially diſcernable, where this *ſeall* and  
*earnest* hath been more abundantly let forth to  
 ſome beyond others; that it was for ſome higher  
 ſupport to their Faith, where a *long interval* of  
*delay* was to be between the *promiſe*, and *perfor-*  
*ment*, and ſuch a tryall of a *deferred hope* herein,  
 as might be ready to make *their heart ſick* into  
 death, if the Lord had not given ſuch a *pledge*  
 and *part in hand* to aſſure them that the reſt ſhall  
 not fail in due time, now this is ſo manifeſt in  
 the *conduct*, and *methods* of grace, about the Saints  
 under the *old Teſtament*, and in how ſingular a *way*  
 he did firſt *ſeall*, before he entred them upon any  
 great tryalls, and which were to be of a *long du-*  
*ration*, as there needs no particular *iſtances* to  
 clear the ſame. 8. It is here, the ſence of that  
*hundred fold*, which *Chriſt* hath ſo expreſſly ſe-  
 cured to his People on the adventures of their  
 Faith may be underſtood, as that which aſſured-  
 ly lyes

ly lyes in these rare enjoiments of the spirit, and *inward sense of the love of their God*, in the shining of his face on them, which are the *first fruits of the Spirit*; more then in any external providence, or these things which are of the highest value with men; since as this is the most sure and greatest evidence that we are Christians, so is it the most notable *sign* how dear such are to God, and of his *love and favour*, then if he had given them the whole World. I know nothing will seem more strange, and disrelishing to the spirit of most this day then such a thing, but *wisdom is justified of her Children*, and with such let my soul be joined in. 9. As it is known and sure that here is no *illusion or imaginary thing*, where any *fallacy or deceit* lyes, to the most judicious and observing Christians, who knows herein, what makes them glad, and whence it is, and how no assistance of their own spirit, or in the power of nature could possibly impart such a thing; so may it be astonishing how such who live under the Profession of Christ, and hath any design on an eternal state in Heaven, can take this on report, or be so little inquisitive about so wonderful a truth, that there should be such an enjoiment here on the earth, which without any *natural cause*, can put the soul of men into an *entire rest, and settlement*, and when under greatest *shakings and fears* otherways, cause them know the truth of *pardon, and peace with God* with a sure evidence,

evidence, yea at so low an ebb can immediately revive and raise with so discernable a change in their inward case; for if this be an undoubted matter of experience it should be not easie for men to live without tryall hereof themselves.

10. Let me *add* further, here is a part of that *communion* which Christians have within time, with the most *excellent of the earth*; and such who in all *ages of the Church* have been the greatest lovers of God, and adventurers for him; such with whom he hath been most familiar, and hath admit not only to the *allowance of Subjects*, but the *regard of favourites*, who hath known how great a *Rewarder* he is of his own *grace*, yea such, who have made the most exact *inquiry* and *tryall*, upon the truth and security of their comfort herein, and *hath put to their seall that God is faithfull and true, in that he hath thus promised.*

4. There is this *special use* to be made of such an *enquiry on the truth of inward experience*, to see how great, and wonderful a *Subject* we have for *reflection hereon*; and of what singular advantage this should be for *strengthening the soul of a Christian*, against the workings of *unbeleef*, and to give a more full security of mind in the adventures of hope and reliance upon God, for things to come. It is sure the *reflex faculty of man* is one of the greatest *wonders of nature*, and if the *spiritual use*, and improvement hereof were more understood on this *Subject*, and what it is to dive in to these

to these still and deep waters, it might make such  
 be oft as a *wonder* to themselves. I shall but point  
 at a few *reflex acts* of a Christian on this great my-  
 stery of spiritual experience, to shew what man-  
 ner of *enjoiments*, these are admit to herein,  
 which the whole residue of mankind knows no-  
 thing of. 1. To have such great supernatural  
 truths of the Scripture, which did once exceed  
 their faith, and reason, to be now matter of un-  
 doubted *experience* in the truth, power, and  
 efficacy hereof on their own souls; and thus  
 to know what belongs to the enjoiments of spiri-  
 tual sence, which formerly seemed so darke and  
 incomprehensible a thing, yea how great a *diffe-*  
*rence* there is betwixt the *clearest Acts of the Judg-*  
*ment*, and *understanding* about *divine things*; and  
 a reall *feeling* of the same in the *power*, and *vertue*  
 thereof; betwixt the most sublime apprehensions  
 by *theory*; and the *sensible impressions*, by the *Holy*  
*Ghost*, and what a present, and marvelous  
 change this makes on the soull of a Christian. 2.  
 To enjoy the same no less under a full *evidence*,  
 and *certainity* of the truth thereof as *the alone*, and  
*immediate Work of God*, then in their felt power  
 and sweetnesse; & that here was no *casual thing*,  
 or matter of doubtfulness or uncertainty, but  
 where they can clearly see the *object* of their *faith*  
 on the *truth of divine Revelation*, now to be the  
*object* of there *inward Sence*, and *enjoyment*; and  
 are sure that what *God hath spoken*, he *hath done*

*according to the same*; for if this be not clear  
*Spiritual comforts* would be of low value if it were  
 not with that evidence, and assurance of being  
*Gods seall*, as they could adventure their eternal  
 state on the truth hereof. 3. And how sweet  
 part is it, when they can thus reflect on their own  
 experience, and enjoy the same with no less evi-  
 dence of the *proper cause*, and *original*, then  
 the truth of its *effects*, which is one of the greatest  
 helps to give stability, and assurance to our Faith  
 to see how the *power of Religion* is never barren of  
*new experiments* of the truth hereof, how the great-  
 est *objective means* in the way of light cannot do  
 if there were not an *Internal effective cause*, that  
 works powerfully herein, and as in *nature*, so  
 in the *way of grace*, how the *same cause*, which  
*makes us live, must make us move, and act*, yea  
 to see how the same spirit that confirms a *Christian*  
 on the truth of his *state*, and of the *enjoyments* of  
*grace* here, does confirm *Christianity*, and the  
*enjoyments of glory*, which must infallibly follow  
 the same, and ere long be a matter of their expe-  
 rience also. 4. To know this way, that surely a  
*nearer intimacy* is to be enjoyed with God, and of  
 a *higher kind*, which is by the *communion of the*  
*Holy Ghost*, then by the *immediate ministry of the*  
*Angels*, yea a greater evidence thus given to a  
*Christians soul*, then by any external *miracles*,  
 since this is a *seall* of that nature, as is given to  
 none, but such as are the *objects of the divine com-*  
*placence*

*placence and delight*; and its sure the alone greatest evidence of divine love lyes in the *internal part of Christianity*, and these immediate operations of the Spirit of God, more then by any external providences. 5. To see, how these great things of *experience*, come under a *present tryall*, and given to be experienced here on the *earth*, and are not some *rare contingency*, or what may be stated on an *extraordinary* account, but does keep clost with a *tender walk*, and near encounters with God through a Christians whole course; and thus knows what such an *anointing with fresh oyl* means *Psalm 92: 10.* by innumerable reiterated times of such enjoinment; yea how the sense and sweetness thereof comes not then by the *power*, and *workings of reason*; but the *immediatnes of the divine presence*; tho even then it does not exclude such a *discursive work*, in the clearness of *Spiritual reason*, and *light*, as can fully quiet the mind, that here is no *illusion*, or *deceit*; but lets us see, that the *Spirit of God* can make use of an *argument* to settle, and secure the soul when all essays, whither from themselves, or others can give no releas. 6. Thus are they admitt to see herewith, how deep the foundation of our *comfort*, and *security*, is layd on the *faithfulness of God* in his revealed truth, so as the whole *frame of Christianity* must be dissolved, and fall ere one special act of trust, and adventure on his hand, and under the assured warrant of his



truth, should be frustrate; and that the *safe conduct* also, and *security* of one Christian, in his passage through time, is of that consequence, and so essential a part of the great frame of providence, that this should not be entire, and perfect if it should fail, as to the meanest of the Saints, to make so great a nullity herein. 7. And is it not, in such a reflex work on the truth of experience, that such can only know the *sweet enjoiments* of *times past*, and what that peculiar comfort of *remembrance* means; which I must reckon one of the rarest, and most unknown enjoiments this day under the Sun; since it is sure, this can never be from the *greatest delights of the earth*, when once passed, which as they return no more, so does ever leav a bitter sting, and *remembrance*, by a native result of the same; whilst that which hath been experienced in the way of God, can neither *perish*, nor lose its *sweetness*, but will render the most *afflicting part of their life past*, which was most bitter, and sore then, to be the most *comforting part* thereof to their remembrance, when they can see herein both what they have *designed for God*, and he hath *done for them*. 8. If there be any comfort of *love*, in the *Communion of the Saints here* within time, they may see how this is not attainable, but in the *light of inward experience* whence they know, what it is to meet, and have fellowship in the same *Savour*, and *relish of the things of God*, when in a *spiritual frame*,  
and

and to be *mutually disclosed* as they can discern something of the excellency of one *another's spirit*, and of the power, and lively workings of *inward grace*, by that *native lustre, and evidence*, which thus follows the same; so as under the sensible power of such *attractions* their souls are more closely unite, and joined together, yea are mutually strengthened by other conflicts, and what experiments they have made of divine truth herein as to their releaf. And I must say where this is not understood, that great *mystery of the Communion of the Saints*, is but a *strange and dark notion*; nor without this can that special design of the Lord in the *settlement of Churches in a visible state*, be either known or answered, which is to have external ordinances carried on with life, and power amongst men, and enjoying communion with our *blessed head* herein.

*The VII. and last INQUIRY.* I would make as to a more full assurance of understanding on the truth of our profession, and for further clearing of this great Subject of the *experimental part of Religion*, is to know the *quality of the witnesses* thereto, which is an *Inquiry* of a higher concern and import then seems to be apprehended, or of what weight, and necessity this is, upon these grounds.

1. Because the whole truth of *Spiritual experience* is matter of *fact*, and founded on a *certain-ty of sense*, it is *truth in the event and performance*,

mance, and not what God does speak, but what according to the same he hath done; so that this is not upon any principle of Faith, but on mens personal tryall of the same, according to that *Isai. 43: v. 10. ye are my witnes* says the Lord, *that ye may know, and beleeve me, and understand that I am he;* for tho it is of divine, and infallible truth, that whatever God hath assured by promise he will do; yet the experience hereof, since the Canon of the Scripture was sealed, is of humane record, and a testimony which could bear no weight from the greatest of men, if the quality of such witnesses were not tried, and considered herein. 2. Because the highest pretence to spiritual enjoinments in the way of the promise is but a false testimony, where there is no tender regard herewith to the precepts of the Gospel, when this connection is indissoluble *Act 9. they walked in the fear of God, and comforts of the Holy Ghost;* *do not my words good to them that walk uprightly* *Mica 2: 7.* It is true, that choicest Christians may be much hid, and in the dark herein to others, and upon such an account should have a sad part, if they were tryed, and judged by men; only this is sure, there can be no more in the conclusion then is in the premises, and that a Christians testimony to the truth lyes more in what they are, then what they express to others. 3. The quality of the witnesses is of such weight here, and to be specially regarded, as one of the highest services

for God within time under their hand, to put too their  
 seall, and testimony that God is true in what he  
 hath promised; who are as it were judicially sisted  
 in behalf of his truth and faithfulness; since his  
 declarative glory before angels, and men, does  
 more peculiarly ly here then in the whole Stru-  
 cture, and frame of this Creation. This is a trust  
 and debt also upon each age of the Church, that  
 the truth and faithfulness of their God may be trans-  
 mitt to the generations to come with such a confir-  
 matory seall. 4. This Inquiry is the more called  
 for, to know what these are who bear such a wit-  
 nes to the truth, upon the exceeding greatnes of  
 these things which belong to Christian experience,  
 since this might awake the most subline, and in-  
 quisitive spirits of the time to search herein, and  
 be a Subject of great thoughts and reflection, that  
 such are on the earth, yea an innumerable part of  
 men, who do verily enjoy so marvelous a light as  
 is immediatly out of Heaven, and shines upon  
 none else; and knowes such an enjoiment, as an  
 immediate communion with the Deity, and his  
 sensible presence with their Spirits, with returns  
 from Heaven to their suits in most reall effects;  
 since if this be sure, then must men seek for an-  
 other Idea of Christianity, & have other thoughts  
 about the same, then what most seem to have;  
 then is there a higher glory put upon mens souls  
 in the way of grace, and their beeing partakers of  
 the divine nature, then what all humane gran-

deur can ever amount to, or is upon the Sun, and the Stars of Heaven. 5. The *credit, and quality of the Witnesses* on this great head of *Spiritual experience*, and the whole *internal part of Christianity* is of such weight that the spirit of this age, and most predominant part of men within the Church is stated in so visible an opposition thereto, not only to oppose the *power, and spirituality of Religion*, but to deny its *principles*, and give a lye to this testimony, of the most eminent workings of the spirit of God on mens souls, as if it were some *illusion or imposture*; which is in effect to take of the *greatest seal* that God hath given to the *Divinity of the Scripture* in the whole *internal demonstrations of its truth*: this is the great prodigy of this age beyond any times past, and may be feared it our Faith stood not sure otherways, that the light should be quickly extinguished, and the candlestick taken away from most of the reformed Churches; when most, under such a profession yet never knew, the *power, vertue, and efficacy of the truth* they profess on their own soul, and that there is another evidence or teaching, then by *moral swasion* only, or another key to open the heart, then *external means*; and thus must either oppose themselves to so tormenting a light, or be unavoidably condemned hereby.

But with this *Inquiry* as to the *credit and quality of the witnesses*, who in all ages of the Church bears the same testimony to the truth from their

*experience*, it is undeniable also, but that there are some in a *more singular way sifted*, and under *more peculiar engagements* than others to appear on such a *testimony*, and who may be admit to enjoyments of *experience*, that are out of the *ordinary road* of Gods dealing with his people, tho this must in no other sense be understood *extraordinary*; then from so *judicial a time* as this, and the *great decay of the Power of Christianity* with this generation why these are so rare, and not in being any way cross to the *firm and settled constitutions of the Gospel*, or without that *precinct of the promise of God to warrant the same*; and I hope the Church of Christ is yet to enter on such enjoyments of *experience* that would not be easie to believe in this day we are in; were they told us at a distance. But what I mean hereby of these, who may be in a higher capacity than others for such a *witness* I shall briefly touch.

1. These who through grace hath been admit to some *higher intimacy of converse with God*, and to know his dealing familiarly with men here on the earth, then may be ever known in such a degree to other choise, and reall Christians; tho I judge this may be more rarely known, that where it is most in truth; there also is a humble concealment, and being hid in the same, their usual studie; who finds more sweetness in such enjoyments the less air they take; & I have oft thought such may be least known on the earth in this day

who may be the greatest *favourits of Heaven*, and have had most rare, and immediate *testimonies* of the love, and respects of their God; but as this is not the *standard* by which the truth, and reality of grace is to be judged; so should this *witness* be to me no further strengthening, then it hath some greater height in *humility*, and *tenderness of Spirit* in the ways of God going alongst herewith, and some more singular eminency of grace as does answer to that *Isai 57: 15. John 14: 21.*

2. I must judge these also have a *higher room* in this *witness for God* on their experience of his truth, who have in a *more singular way* then others known the truth of supernatural assistance, and sustaining grace under extraordinary tryalls. I mean such Christians as have been tryed not only in the truth, but in the *strength of divine grace*, at another rate then others, whom I must reckon amongst the greatest *witnesses* for God in this day, when 1. This renders their *testimony* to be of a higher valew and evidence according to the height, and measure of their *conflicts*, and *tryalls*, whom thus the Lord hath choised, and separate as *Joseph* was from the *residue of his brethren*, for such a service of *example*, that the excellency of his grace might here more brightly shine forth.

2. Because the *deposition* herein, is in a matter on which most doe stumble at the ways of God, upon that scandal of the cross; and on this account it may be said, they are sent as *messengers*,  
and



and *spyes*, to witness what manner of allowance he does then impart, to bear the expence of a more extraordinary time of affliction, and suffering, and what immediate support is then found above the allowance of ordinary times; that with *Caleb*, and *Joshua*, they might bear a honourable report for God unto others. 3. The credit of this *testimony* riseth the higher, as it hath cost them so dear, who bear the same, and hath not been easily attained, nor is an *offering unto God of that which costs them nothing*, who have been helped beyond others to glorify him in the fires. 4. They are such above the residue of Christians, who hath usually a record of more *special confirmations*, and great remarks of the way of God, in the *Journal*, and *History of their life*; I know most would fear to have a room in such a testimony, but as I doubt not there are many such *witnesses* this day in the earth, so I must reckon it, one of the most honourable services for God upon it, and will ere long know the full sence of that truth; when *he hath tryed them to bring them forth as gold Job 23: 10.*

3. And are not such specially sifted as *witnesses* herein, and under more *singular engagements* than others, who upon greater *Services* for God assigned to them, hath also had more then ordinary allowances, of immediate *divine assistance* for the same, to witness that they have not been sent hereon on their own *charge*, and *expence*;

this is one of the great discoveries that the Lord gives unto men of his being God, and is a clear and demonstrative evidence of that reall, and near communication, which the *Churches head* hath with his *body* here on the earth. I know this hath a special respect to such, as are called of the Lord on that *Service of the Ministry of his Word*, who hath some peculiar, and distinct part allotted to them as *witnesses*, and put on a more publick *theater* before the World, to witness that absolute dependance, which the work, and service of that *station* hath on their great *Master*, and the *outlettings* of his *Spirit* both for support, and success, and what thus is found in the way of an immediate relyance on him; for I must judge that none knowes a near intercourse with God, and to be *purely acted* for him, on this great *service*, but hath some peculiar advantage beyond any else for more *singular*, and *rare confirmations* of the *truth* on their own *soul*, and of a known, and sensible *seall* from God both in *fruit*, and *acceptance* of their work; and tho such who look at a distance, cannot discern, what may be betwixt God, and his *Servants*, in some publick *administrations* of his *service*, as may be then evident to their *soul*, yet is it oft made so far discernible, as to serve an awful sence and impression on mens *Spirits*, of God in the *Assemblies* of his *Church*, and of the truth of *supernatural assistances*, and something more then *humane* herein; nor does such a

*witness* ever cease, tho it be now more rare then in times past, in this *sad* and *judicial* period of time, we are fallen in, when almost all *sence*, *savour*, and *discerning of the Spirit of God*, with *publick administrations of the Word*, seems lost, & the *wisdom of Words*, or what may appear more neat or polished that way, is come in the room hereof, as though the alone end, of so high a service were to act a scene handsomly on a theater that may carry the applause of the *Spectators*, but not *mens hearts unto God*; this I have lookt on with no less horror then on the most visible *Atheism*, and profanity of these times, and one of the most dismal Signs in the *publick state of Religion*.

4. These also may have some higher access for such a *witness*, who know with evidence, the truth of *immediate, and supernatural excitements*, to engage upon some *special work*, and *service for God*, and to be acted forth herein under the power, and *irresistable discovery of an inward call*, when under greatest oppositions from their own spirit thereto, and furthest aversion of mind. This I have known in the truth hereof in most eminent *examples*, but the credit of such a testimony, tho in it self, founded on divine Revelation, does necessarily require such an evidence of the *quality of the witnesses* herein; that they be of a *known tender, humble, and judicious Spirit*, who are skilled both in the *deep things of God*, and in the *deeps of Satan*, who this way  
does

does oft act in the greatest deep, and mystery of delusion.

5. There is yet something more *singular* in the experience of some Christians beyond others, and in such a witness, as to a special confidence, and assurance raised on their soul, of events of providence, and the issue of some remarkable case of tryall, when it hath been contrare to all humane appearances, and no reason from any visible airt could be given for the same; this I know may seem a strange thing in the eyes of many, nor can it possibly have that evidence, or in that manner work to others, as it is to these, who know, and have experienced the same, but we see, and are sure there hath been great attainments of such a Faith, both in *Scripture examples*, and *uncontroverted experiments*, made hereof in after times, which hath met such in the road of their duty, and in an express harmony, and correspondence with the Word, since the extent of our Faith in any particular case, must keep with the same extent, and measure of divine Revelation herein, and the Lord will be trusted for no more then he hath made warrantable by his promise. But this is a Subject, on which I may not insist further then to clear the evidence and truth of the same on these grounds.

1. That Christians may be at such steps in their way and passage through time, and on so dark ground; yea the tide of difficulties, and amasing fears swelled to so great a hight, that  
if there

if there were not a support of this kind, by an *argument of power*, to their soul, they should otherways be ready to sink. 2. This *experiment* how rare so ever it may seem to many, is no *dark*, or *distinct thing* from that *seal of the spirit of promise*, which we should look after; or from that *promised earnest*, which sometimes the Lord gives, with respect to a *special mercy*, and *deliverance* within time as well as their *great interest in Heaven*, tho it be not in the same *degree* imparted to some as to others. 3. It is also of no other kind then that settled allowance on the *Saints*, of the *peace of God* in such a measure as can raise, and fully quiet their spirit, above any sinking fears, and above the *present assault* they may be under, tho with such evidence then, as is not possible to attain at other times, nor can be kept clear, and comforting to themselves without much *tenderneſſe of spirit and fear*. 4. Where this is known, and enjoyed in any higher degree by some then may be the allowance of others, it is assuredly found on a special & near intimacy with God, and to follow some discernable access, and special *gale of the spirit of intercession in prayer, and wrestlings*; so as it thus meets them in the way of a settled ordinance, and in the same way wherein we may see the Saints in Scripture have attained to a confidence of this kind; for otherways there could be no comforting evidence of its being the undoubted *work of God*. 5. And here must

must be tryed, & sought for, whither the more immediate testimony of God, does then still bring the testimony of the renewed conscience alongst there with so as to clear the condition in themselves, and their claim thereto, of such a special promise, whereon their confidence hath been raised, where by it is thus rendred to them an absolute promise that can not possibly be frustrate. 6. I shall but add further as this rare experiment comes with such evidence of spiritual sense, as is discernable from any natural workings of mans own heart, and is that wherein the most deep enquiry and judicious tryall of Christians is needful to know that its surely from God, and hath both his warrant, and seall herewith, so is it not strange that where he takes a more singular way to try and exercise some, and out of the ordinar road of his dealing with others, yea where support in the way of external providence may then cease, that this special allowance by inward evidence be something more singular also, and some higher influence of the spirit and power of beleiving be imparted for such a case:

This leads me to offer some thoughts in the close upon two Proposals, which I did not intend, if from another airth, whilst I was writing this there had not occurred a special call herein, and that I judged it might not be unsuitable to the intent of this discourse.

I. Whither there be any such seall to the truth

of Christianity in these times we are now in as the Faith of Miracles, or that it be warrantable to expect such a thing from God, which lyes in a particular act of trust in some special case, where a Christian may be taken off all ordinarie means, and nothing but a divine immediate, and miraculous Power can answer thereto; for Answer it is clear the active Faith hereof which was once given to the Primitive Church in the workings of miracles now ceaseth, but in this passive Sence, I know no time, nor age, to which it does not belong, and comes not under the Promise of God, to warrant the same in these cases.

1. When the Lord measures out such tryalls to any of his people in the way of their duty, and under his special conduct, where there is no relief, or support, but in the Faith of an extraordinary, and immediate appearance of God, and no neglect in the least; of what in the way of ordinarie, and warrantable means is attainable, it is sure, there it is both warranted and requires such a Faith, yea are put by a more singular call on the tryall of the same, and in this respect; I doubt not there hath been, and may yet be in the present age greater attainments of the same, then most of Christians can easily comprehend, whose tryalls were never brought to such a pitch, and in that manner assigned to them; since these are of the Lord measured out only according to the measure of Faith given them Rom. 12: 3.

2. As



2. As none may *abridge the Spirit of God in the freedome, and Sovereignty of his work* herein, whatever times men be in, so is it known and clear, that where the Lord does allott more *extraordinary cases* whither to Churches or particular Christians, when such are keeping close by him, and the revealed rule of their duty, there also is a more *extraordinary allowance* for the same, yet such a *measure and encrease of their Faith* to be sought from the great author thereof, as may answer the present case, to have their *strength* according to their *day*.

3. It is unquestionable that the Lord designs in all ages of his Church, to bring glory to himself, by such a *faith as hath no ground to grip on*, but an *infinit and immediate power* that can extend it self to the most desperate and amasing case, nor is a *beleeving in hope*, when it is to be furthest against hope, a strange and dark thing in this day, either as to the warrant hereof, or these proofs, which have been made of the same in the issue. And herein I must judge the appearance of God no less wonderful to some of his people in that which he *works in them*, and in that deliverance from their fears where no *humane Reason or Secondary causes* could concurr, then in that which he hath done for them in the most stupendious acts of Providence, nor does any time want some share and proper talent of this kinde, if such great *appearances of God* were more observed, that might

might be singularly strenthning to the *Christian Faith*.

4. Is there a reall Christian this day, who is not called to such a *Faith*, that he shall once upon himself experience a greater miracle by a *divine omnipotent Power* then was yet ever wrought in the earth, which is of the *Resurrection of his body*, after it hath been for some ages dissolved into dust, wherein it is, by the undoubted *Faith of miracles* to be wrought upon himself, that his greatest *support and comfort* within time stands; yea if there be such a *Faith* in the earth, which is now still warranted, as that we have *Pf. 46: 12.* it must then ly in ane *actual trust*, and *relyance in a case where a miracle can only help.*

5. If *possessions by the Devil* were in that manner now usual as in the *primitive times*, it is undeniable, that the *Prayer of Faith* herein for *dispossession* were not only warranted, but expressly called for, tho the *inward assurance* of such a *Faith* may not in the same manner be given to some as to others; yet here is a special suiting from God the *proof of a miracle*, by his *immediate Power*, which they are in faith called too; and as that *Prescript* given by our *Lord of fasting and prayer* for this end does still stand in force to hath there been known publick instances in these late times, of reall *dispossessions by prayer*, and solemn addresses to Heaven herein.

6. If the *oppressed innocence of a Christian*, and in

such a case where the honor of God were highly concerned, should be so stated, as to be beyond humane releaf for clearing the same, there might be herein an unquestionable reference to God, for his more *immediate decision*, and a warrantable ground to suit for the *spirit of faith in such a measure*, as so extraordinary a tryall requires, beyond what in an ordinar case is allowable, but so as to wait for the same, in his season and way. This I know was in the *primitive times* in some more singular manner made use off, when no ordinar means was attainable for the same, but as that could have no safe warrant, so the *Law of jealousie*, and tryall by the *waters of jealousie* Numb. 5. was then temporary and is now ceased yet is this still *moral* herein and of *perpetual use* that, God is the same who hath reserved to himself an immediate appearance of himself, when no ordinar means can help; yea that promise Ps. 57:3. is expressly given for such an end of *his sending from Heaven* immediatly to save, where no assistance on the earth is attainable, and all natural means fail.

7. It is unquestionable that the making use of *Lots* (which in such a case is only safe, where it is rendred absolutely necessar for a final determination in some great, and weightie concern) is such a *solemn appeal to an extraordinary decision of God*, as the faith of his appearance by a *promised, and immediate sign from himself* is necessarily required.

required, tho it be not by any strange or *miraculous evidence* yet is as truly to be taken from God in such a case, and in *faith* subjected to, as it some *supernatural sign* did accompany the same, and as no *humane wisdom or counsel* can have place here - in as to the event, so I must judge an entire acquiescence of mens spirits on such a determination, shewes not only a deep and reverent Service of the Majesty of God, but that this is as truly his answer, as if they had seen *fire coming down from Heaven to consume the Sacrifice*, as was in the days of *Elijah* at mount Carmel.

8. It may be said that the truth of such a *faith* hath in a special evidence, and power hereot been known when things have come to some *unusual extremity in a Christians case*, as could bear no delay but like that of the *Disciples of Christ*, *help Lord ere we perish*; instances of this kind have been so clear as, I judge, is not possible to deny the truth of such a *seall* to the *Faith of Christians*, were things of that nature more adverted to and observed. It is a few years past, that a famous *Minister of Christ*, who now is at rest in the Lord, was under such an extraordinary pain and torment by a confirmed stone in the *gizzard*, bladder as nature sunk wholly under the same, and as he shewed me was brought to that extremity, that he turned to God with such a cry, let not thy servant distract, but help, for I can possibly bear no more, who said also that in the very

„ present moment it was immediatly taken off,  
 „ and this at once, with a perfect ease and releas  
 „ and did recurr no more till the day of his *death*,  
 „ which was sometime after: this as I had from  
 „ *himself*, so was it from one that none in the  
 „ age he lived in, I could have credited more,  
 „ and could leave no room for doubting that such  
 „ a *return in the present act of prayer*, at so great a  
 „ height, and *extremity of pain*, without any  
 „ *natural cause* and mean, was immediatly from  
 „ God, and *supernatural*. I knew also with assu-  
 „ rance such an *instance*, in a *Minister of the Gho-*  
 „ *pel*, who was seased in the *Sabbath morning*, with  
 „ an *extraordinary collick*, which grew upon him  
 „ to that height, as in an ordinarie way rendred it  
 „ not possible to go forth upon the publick work of  
 „ the day, which then lay upon him, and to a great  
 „ *Auditory* at that time, so that whilst he essayed  
 „ to rise, he was pressed to take his *bed* again, a  
 „ very few minutes before the sett time for going  
 „ to *Church*, but whilst he presented the case to  
 „ God, upon the interest of his service, it was  
 „ in a moment taken off, not by any gradual ab-  
 „ atement of such a distemper, but entirely  
 „ once, so as he never had more sweet access and  
 „ freedome to go forth on the work of the Lord  
 „ both at that *dye*, and in the following part of  
 „ the *publick work*; and this also was, when no  
 „ outward mean was concurring herein; as it is  
 „ clear, that the *passive Faith*, which *Christ* dis-

ſpecially require for an *immediate* cure from himſelf *Matth* 9. was this, *beleeveſt thou that I am able to help*, when no *ordinaire* means can do; ſo I doubt not this was in ſome meaſure acted in both theſe inſtances, leaving roome for omnipotency to act in ſuch an exigence.

9 Nor hath there been wanting eminent proofs of this kind of ſpecial *applications of Faith*, made unto God by *prayer* in behalf of others under *diseases*; where *ordinaire* means hath been laid aſide, and the *caſe* paſt all hope, and of ſuch *returns* by a preſent reſtoring, and under ſuch evidence as enforced the conviction hereof, upon mens conſcience that we may ſee how in ſome *ſtrange caſes* of this kind the true *cauſe*, and the *Lords deſign* herein does not untill then break up, according to that *John* 9: 3. *That the work of God might be thus made manifeſt in them.*

10 I may further add, if there were this day a new erection, and ſettlement of ſome particular Church from amongſt *Infidells*, and the commiſſion for this end of *Ministers of Chriſt* made evident, and clear to go forth on ſuch a ſervice, where no *natural* and *ordinaire* means of conviction were attainable, I doubt not but ſomething in a more extraordinary way, of the *faith of miracles*, and *immediate appearances of God* berein might be expected, as in the *primitive times*, when on the ſame ground it was lett forth. Nor can it be found there hath been any particular

*Church of Christ* without some *extraordinary* seal of this kind, especially in the first entry and erection of the same; nor is there any time or age of the Church, wherein the clear sence of that Scripture *Mark 9: 23.* — *all things are possible to them that beleeve*, does not take place: which is that no measure of tryall or difficulties, whither as to Churches or particular Christians in the way of their duty, can be at such an height, as to restrain or lett bounds to the *work of Faith on an infinite divine power*, tho all natural or second causes should cease, yea that there is no case so singular, wherein the *warrant of a divine Promise* herein, and a *Christians Faith*, should not be of the same extent.

The 11. *Proposal* that I shall breefly touch; as it thus followes upon the former, is *whither in these last times the Lord does appear by any such extraordinary signs, that are publick in the sight of the World*, and bring near such discoveries of his *Godhead in any special acts of Providence*, as may bear the same evidence of miracles. For Answer; it is sure, the Lord does not reveal himself this way, but on some great and extraordinary ground, who hath settled the faith of his Church absolutely on his revealed truth, yet may it be said, that no age is left without some witnesse of such a kind; if there were not a sad inadvertence, and shutting of mens eyes, when the Lord is going by them in any great acts of his power, but as to this *Propo-*  
sal



shall only point at some *instances*, that seem to have least suitable regard or notice, and to be put by with most.

1. Can there be a serious judgment and reflection on that *great and amazing stroke* of the *Pestilence*, and not see an extraordinary appearance of God herein, and of its being a judgment of that kind, in some more remarkable times wherein it is left forth, as goes above all *natural causes*, and all may see the *immediate hand* of God herein both in its *rise*, *progress*, and *swift spreading* as a *lightning*, through *Cities* or *Countries*, in its passing by some more than others where no cause can appear, so as men must see its being sent with commission from Heaven, and a *supernatural causality*, as visibly as if they had stood with *David*, and the *Elders of Israel* 2 Samuel 29: 17. to see the *Angel* that *smote* the *People* between the *Heaven*, and the *Earth*; upon which account *David* did choose rather to come under this stroke than the *Sword* or *Famine*, because it was in a more immediate way the hand of the Lord, and where there is a more than ordinary near approach, and discovery of himself unto men.

2. It is of *publick* and uncontrollable evidence, that *miraculous*, and immediate witness from Heaven in the *bleeding of the bodies of men* on the touch of the *murderer* in such cases, where no ordinary means can bear evidence. I will not speak of the warrantable use of such an appeal where

the revealed rule of our faith, and practice is not express herein; but as its undoubted, in the truth and reality of the same, where no humane wit- nesse could answer to this end, so is it surely and immediate, *visible*, and *extraordinaire sign from Heaven* given in the sight of the World, & from him who *maketh inquisition for blood*, in a most singular way, and a sign which in every time is made evident.

3. There is also the certainty of *extraordinaire Revelation*, and of the truth of a *Prophetick Spirit* imparted to some as to special events of Providence, which is so known and of that evidence as no age of the Church hath been without instances hereof, what I mean hereby as to that more singular way of the Lords revealing himself, to some of his *Servants* by a more extraordinar application of his Word, is such as in the truth and certainty hereof can leave no room for doubtfulness; tho on the other hand, as to the way and *dismal trade of divination*, that hath got up in the World, by seeking a *Divinity* either from the *Stars above* or the *Powers of darknes below*, it may be clearly seen is one of the great designs of Satan, not only to counterfeit the way of the Lord herein, but to bring men unto a more direct homage to himself; but I mention this instance only as it is so great, and unquestionable a *demonstration of God*, and of his giving in every age some *extraordinaire seall* of this kind.

I shall

I shall but mention here one remarkable *passage* of which I am to the furthest perswaded, that may seem strange, with respect to this late *great Revolution in the State of Britain*; how it was expressly foretold under its proper circumstances many years past; and was one of the first passages of any weight that hath been still fixed in my remembrance; of a relation I had from an ancient, and *eminent Minister of Christ* of a *Prediction* imparted to him by one of an extraordinary, and Prophetick Spirit in that time; that so great, a Scene of Providence should be acted in *Britain*, and change in the publick face of affaires by the coming over of a *Prince of Orange*, who should be the great Instrument, and Actor therein; and tho some particulars relating thereto I cannot exactly remember, yet this in the substance with such an express designation as I have now mentioned hath from my young years had a settled impression in my memory, and as I am sure and perswaded of the truth hereof, and that the foresaid Relater had such a *Prediction* long before there was any alliance betwixt the House of *Britain* and of *Orange*; yea am sure this did exceed the reach of humane apprehension at that time, from any rise or tendency of natural causes in the order and series thereof; so is it not now mentioned after the event only, but what several years before, I gave an ac-

„ count and relation off to some of great quality,  
 „ who still know the same, when there was not  
 „ the least appearance of such a thing, tho I could  
 „ lay no further weight thereon, which seemed so  
 „ strange and improbable, but that the thing in it  
 „ self as to the truth of such a Prediction was  
 „ reall.

4 That there are *supernatural warnings* hath  
 been given to men by some special instinct and im-  
 pression not only of the approach of some great, and  
 extraordinary tryall with respect to themselves,  
 but of the near approach of their death, yea to  
 some, the precise time hereof is a truth so known in  
 the World, and with that undeniable evidence  
 as might fully convince those of the most doubtful  
 and suspicious Spirit in things of that nature, and  
 were it suitable here, I might give special instances  
 which I have surely known of this kinde with  
 respect to such, who were both pious and of  
 great composure in their judgment, who hath  
 had such perswasion fixed on them without the  
 least presage from any natural cause, or what in  
 an ordinary way could give a rise thereto, as it  
 did after fall out in the event.

5. That there are also *extraordinary signs*, and  
*forewarnings* given the World of great *Revolutions*  
 and *Judgments*, ere they came on particular na-  
 tions by prodigies and signs from Heaven, is of that  
 publick evidence, and certainty as would seem  
 not possible to question: if some methods of op-  
 position

position to God both in his Word and Works were not peculiar to this age, and the spirit thereof this way beyond any that hath gone before, for what may be supposed and misjudged by many on such an account through ignorance and unacquaintance with natural causes, and the extent thereof, is not to be questioned, but from this, will men debate or discredit a truth that all ages must witness, and these of the most cautious and discerning amongst men, how such solemn *fore-warnings from Heaven by extraordinary signs, and prodigies*, hath been still previous to publick changes and revolutions, and to any great calamities, and judgements. Its sure these are no imaginary things, but are direct for some special end, and are sometimes in such a manner visible to the experience of the World, as hath not been in like manner known for some ages past, as that late Comet 81. yea occur not according to the settled constitutions of nature, but come both with an surprising aspect, and are expressly formed and directed of the Lord for some higher end then to be an empirie shew, and wonder to the World; but when the Word of truth, and threatnings thereof ceaseth to *warne* or be matter of trembling, and the *Atheistick contempt*, and *derision of the Works of God* is in this day at such a height, its like the door may be now judicially shut on any extraordinary *presages* or *warnings* this way untill one *prodigy* of some unusual judgement come, that will not be baffled by men. Whilst

Whilst I speak on such a Subject; I know there is a strange thing that comes under the *notion*, by many, of a *miracle*, tho matter of very ordinarie thoughts with others, and of a light and common regard about the same, which is in that *strange, and astonishing cure of the Struma*, or as its termed the *Kingsevil by a touch of the hand only*, without any application of ordinary means; that here is no *imposture* in the truth of such a thing, but that many have been undoubtedly healed by this *touch of the Kings of England*, is not questionable, which is of so *publick*, and *known evidence* in the tryall of *numerous instances*, yea that here is something *supernatural*, and unaccountable to humane understanding on *principles of reason*; when its one of the most *conrumacious* diseases of mens body, that in the ordinarie use of means is found the most difficult to cure; but since any *extraordinaire effect* should lead men to a deep enquiry, and tryall about the *cause* hereof, and have the more weight in such a case that a *miraculous work*, where it is in truth, is *Gods own seall*, which he doth rarely give but on some great, and important ground, where his glory and the interest of his truth is highly concerned; yea that its sure, where he intends such a *miraculous discovery* of himself to confirm the faith of his people, he gives it with the clearest evidence of his work, and a concurrence of such *circumstances*, as may serve conviction on all, whose

*impreß and signature* it bears, to difference the  
 same from any imposture, or its beeing a diabo-  
 lick sign and work, and so this calls for a just en-  
 quiry; and tryall in the pretent case in these re-  
 spects. 1. To know its *true rise and original*,  
 which I find in the *English Chronicles* to be dated  
 from the time of *Edward the Confessor*, when  
*Antichristian darkness* was then at his greatest  
 height, it beeing in the 1042 Year, when he  
 began to reign, and when that *Prediction of the*  
*Apostle Theßal. 2: 2.* of a more then ordinary po-  
 wer and working of *Satan*, with signs and  
 lying wonders to promote the *Antichristian* in-  
 terest, was then taking place; and was in that  
 sence only admitt to confirm the *Romish Faith* by  
 such a strange miracle. 2. This *Inquiry* should  
 be necessar herein, whither this pretended mira-  
 culous power belong to the *Crown* only, or hath  
 respect to the *Quality*, and *Holineß* of the per-  
 sons who weare the same, since if it be to the first,  
 then tho ane *Infidel*, or *Mahumetan* were esta-  
 blished on the *Throne*, if this gift follow the  
 same it must needs be derived to them also, and  
 have such a high Priviledge annexed thereto, as  
 the *Throne of Israel* never had, when a *David*,  
 and *Solomon* sat thereon tho endued with ane ex-  
 traordinaire *Uñction*; but if it respect the *Quali-  
 ty* and *Holineß* of the persons, it surely must ren-  
 der this no less difficult, that not only such as  
*King Henry the VIII.* and his Daughter *Queen*  
*Mary*



*Mary*, besides many others, yea *Richard the III.* should on this account have the *active faith of miracles*, and be empoured herewith from God for working of the same: besides this it is known that the *French Kings* claim the same privilege and power as peculiar to them alone, and may not on this ground *Lewis the XIV* this day be reckoned a fit instrument for such a *healing miracle*, and to bring a just repute and credit thereto. 3. But whence is it that such a *hereditary gift* should not fail, and be cutt off by the *departure of England from the Romish Church*. since the first holding hereof was upon their adherence to the same, and as a *confirmatory Seall to the Romish Profession*, or that it should now controll the end for which it was given; I know what some *Papish Writers* say hereon, that this miracle is not now performed by such who have apostatised from that faith, *virtute propria*, sed *virtute signi crucis*, but there needs no such *Salvo*, as to reckon its being alienate now from serving for the same use, and end it did before, nor to have another rise if it were seriously pondered. 4. But what interest in this cure hath the use of such a *rite in applying with the touch a Medal of Gold to the Patient therewith*, or what vertue can this *Amulet* impart, and so great a care taken, that they should not lose it; since it is sure this is not given out of charity to there outward want, except it be from ostentation to shew they are en-

ded

dued with a *gift* which the *Apostles* had not when they *cured the lame man*, and could make use of no such assistance of *Silver* or *Gold* herein *Act. 3. 5.* If the application of ane *extraordinary gift* for healing diseases without the use of *natural means* be enough to warrant the same, and that such a cure is wrought without any further enquiry as to the cause and ground whereon it hath such an effect, it is then sure, the *Devil*, and thele *Powers of darknes* may have a publick and easie market in the Christian Church, and exact an uncontrolled homage and subjection to them this way. the extent of whose power for curing of diseases is beyond our reach, but since such a *miraculous gift* of healing if it be of God should be tryed in the truth thereof, how it can answer to such peculiar *evidences*, and *criteria* of the same, as by the infallible *rule*, and *light of the Scripture* may be clear; it were suitable to try herein, if this be indeed given to *confirm and seall a divine testimony* or any *truth of the written Word*; if it come with that *solemne and convincing evidence* so as to serve a *deep and reverent sense of the Majesty of God* on mens spirit, by such a discovery of himself, and to promote *piety*, and more firm adherence to the truth amongst men, as the native effect that should follow a true *miracle*, and so extraordinary a seall, if it serve also to control the *Kingdom of Satan*, and strengthen the *Christian Faith* in opposition to *Antichristian* dark-

*darkness*, and *Idolatry*; yea if these who are thus empoured for so miraculous a cure have something suitable on their part of qualifications, to such whom God hath ever made use off to work *miracles*, otherwise it serves only to expose so great a *scall* to the Christian Faith, wherein the *Majesty of God* in so august, and solemne a way is revealed, unto the highest contumely and reproach. 6. Though this hath been a continued practice, and that the *matter of Fact*, and notoriety of experience herein in the truth of such a cure is not questioned, yet if it be essentially requisite, that such as claim to this power, should do it in the *Faith of a divine Warrant*, and assurance that it is of God, with an immediate reliance on a special outletting of some extraordinary power from him herein, and of his *call* to rest on the same, when it is without respect to any *institute*, & *natural means*, yea that there spirit in such a case should be suited to so extraordinary a worke, I judge it should then quickly cease; as on the other hand that these who are *deseased*, and apply themselves to such a cure, should know the warrant of their faith herein, else it were as justifiable to go to *Loretta* on such an account, or to such who pretend by *spells*, and *charms*, to work extraordinary cures without any ordinary means for the same. This is not to detract in the least from any just right or priviledge of *Soveraign Princes*, and I judge these who are now on the

Throne

*Throne of Britain* might lay as just a claim from personal qualifications thereto, as any have gone before, but in giving to *Cæsar* what is due unto him, we must not invade that *Royalty*, and *Prerogative* which belongs to *God* only, or to pretend to his *seal*, and make use of it without his express warrant. If any *Protestant Writer* have spoke their thoughts on such a head, I have as yet seen none; but some time past, I was necessarily called by a person of great worth, to impart my light herein, they being then much perplexed in spirit with respect to a near relation of theirs, in order to their using such a mean; and how small a reckoning may be made by many, yet I find it related of that *Famous Christian Mrs. Honynwood*, that the first rise of these terrors of conscience which kepted her so long, was from consulting some mean as to the recovery of a childe, in a way that was out of the roade of ordinar means, and made her fear afterwards lest *Satan* might have a hand therein.

But I shall now cease to speak more on this subject; and only shut up with some *Reflections* further which have been matter of serious thoughts to me.

1. Whence it is that such who are of the most trying and comprehensive spirit hath usually been under greatest weight and exercise of minde, abiding in their establishment in the *Christian Faith* more than any others: but herein it may be easie to see,

and discern the true *cause* thereof, 1. How it is sure, the more attainment of *light* and *knowledge* is upon the greatnesse of their *Faith*, that a higher admiration and astonishment must needs follow thereon; it was this which above all the wonders and depths of nature, did swallow up the spirit of a *Solomon*, and put him into such an *extacy*, when he once begun to fix on this *Subject*, *but will God indeed dwell, with men on the earth*, yea will the *eternal Son of God* take up his abode, and dwell in such a tabernacle as the humane nature, and become truly man which is specially there imported 2 *Chron* 6: 18. 2. It is these only who have their souls seased with a deeper sense then others, of the *high, and wonderful consequence of such a Faith*, as to themselves, and what is their personal interest herein; on which their souls venture for eternity lyes; so as it is not strange, that they can not possibly enjoy the comfort of such a Faith under any doubtful suspence this way, or have their souls at rest, with that manner of *assent* wherewith most satisfie themselves in this day. 3. Yea it is these alone, who have another *Idea of Religion*, and the *wonders of the Christian Faith* settled on their spirit, then the residue of men, who thus see what great things are before them, and shortly to come to pass, and how such a Faith is not easily attained; but that a continued weight, and exercise herein on their spirits becomes unavoidable. And

tho Sir to one of such a spirit, as I know you are off, there needs little be said of this kind, yet when I look on the face of this *Generation*, even of the more serious part of men herein, it would appear that most were rather in a *sleep and dream*, then *awake*; else were it conceivable, how they could find it easie to bear, and stand under the weight of such *discoveries*, without almost fainting under the greatness hereof, if they be indeed assured of such things as these. 1. That within a little time, their eyes are to be for ever shut on this earth. and in one moment opened on that entry which is into another *World*, and on that hid, and marvelous *passage*, which lyes betwixt the *earth*, and the *higher Paradise above*, which is in the *third Heavens*, and will then know what it is to see with clear, and preceptible evidence ther conduct, and conveyance by the *blessed Angels*, and the manner of their *ascent through these Ethereal Regions*, in every step of the same, their begun acquaintance, and society with these *glorious spirits*; which shall be without fear, and consternation, as when they were in the *body*, and at last that unconceivable reception by the *blessed Trinity*; now is it possible, that men here on the earth can with assurance entertain their souls with such great things as before them, and near, and yet in an ordinarie way converse with the same. 2. Is it a light or small thing to live in the Faith of such a *Triumph*, as is reserved to each of the

Saints in the issue of their warefare, when the *God of Peace shall tread Satan under their feet*, and shall enter them into the *overcomers joy*, with that publick testimonie, *well done good, and faithful servant &c.* before the whole Church of the redeemed there, and then to be called to a peculiar assignment of their *room*, and *station* in that *blessed state* answerable to their services and attainments of grace here, when they shall see the *end of the Lord* in his whole conduct and methods of providence about them within time, which once seemed incomprehensible to their thoughts.

3. Yea what is it to be in the serious exercise of such a *Faith*, that in a short time there shall be a *final translation of the whole Church militant from this earth to these higher Regions of glory*, where no more distance of place, and but one Church and Society for ever, where our *blessed Redeemer shall then rejoice in his whole purchase*, whom he had bought at so dear a price, and presented without spot, or blemish unto the Father; and where the whole *elect* from *Abell*, the first of humane race, that entred Heaven, and the first member of the Church triumphant there, to the last, who was called by the Gospel, shall meet once and for ever together.

4. And are there such now on the earth, who shall ere long see themselves in the same *state* and *classse* with the *elect Angels*, who could not in this *state of mortality* bear the sight, or apparition of one of these glorious spi-

rits;



rits; yea shall enjoy them in the same intimacy of  
 fellowship as these that were redeemed from a-  
 mongst men; and tho with humble sobriety, I  
 would offer any thoughts on so high a mystery,  
 yet seems it safely warranted to judge, that as  
 each of these *blessed spirits*, is a *distinct person*  
 from other, endued with a most excellent life;  
 and understanding, tho in some different degree  
 of *exaltation*, as to their *office and services*, so  
 are they ane undoubted part of the *Church*, over  
 which *Christ is the supreme Head*; wherein at  
 that *last and great Jubilee*, even in something of  
 a glorious corporeal frame, there may be a likeness,  
 and conformity to him, *in whom the fulnesse of the*  
*Godhead dwells bodily*, and for a more near one-  
 nesse, and Communion with the Saints made  
 perfect, who shall then not only be *like*, but *e-*  
*qual to the Angels*, which otherwise could not be  
 well understood, since it is sure their *bodies*,  
 though then spiritual and glorious, will be the  
 same in *substance* that they were here, and will not  
 be only *spirits*. 5. And what a wonder of our  
*Faith* should it be that ere long this also shall be  
 the object of mens lense, *the conflagration of this*  
*whole earth*; that earth, on which most of the  
 generations of men had settled their *Heaven*, to  
 see it all *burnt up* before them, and herein the fi-  
 nal issue of their hopes, and projects upon the  
 same, whilst nothing to such will then further  
 remain, but to enter themselves into everlasting

flames. 6. Is it a small thing to enjoy such a *Faith* here on the earth, as that *reunion*, which they shall then have with so endeared a part of themselves, their *body*, and what a *meeting* that must be after so dark a parting, and separation; these very *bodies* which had been partners with them, both in their work and services, and in all their sufferings within time; which they can now embrace never to part with, to partake of the same eternal enjoiments, and which will be then no lett to their *ascent* to meet the Lord in the air.

7. Can it possibly be a subject of ordinarie thoughts or assent, that men now on the earth, shall shortly see the *glory* and *state* of the last *Judgment*, and of their *blessed Head* on that *Throne* of His *Majesty*, yea thus see at once, the whole generations of men, and these who sometime were the greatest *Monarchs* here, presented then to be judged; and to see such a *solemn particular*, and *distinct* judgment past on each according to their deeds, and work within time; and in that blessed *order* wherein the whole *Saints*, and each personally of these, having a distinct part herein, shall be *first acquitt*, *approven*, and *accepted* in the face of this great *Assembly*, with the publick testimony of the *Judge*, according to the *measure of their service* and *tryalls* for his sake, whilst they were in the *World*; and next in the *condemnatory part* of that *Judgment* to see the whole *fallen Angels*, who *first sinned* have the

first final sentence pass on them; as it was thus intimate after the fall of man, & the whole successive race of mankind, each in their order, with that full evidence, of the *Holy Righteousness of the Judge herein*, as shall irresistably constrain their conscience to bear witness thereto. 8. Yea what a concern of the *Christian Faith* lyes here, of that eternal separation and parting, which will then follow betwixt the elect, and reprobate World, with that dreadful dimission to these infernal Regions, and with this sight to see sin, which made its first entry in *Heaven amongst the Angels*, and hath since so much overspread the earth, now for ever shutt up in hell, both sin, and sinners together, never more to look out at the grate of these prisons.

But II. There is another thing with respect to this Subject, which hath been to me oft matter of serious thoughts, whence is it that in so knowing an age as this, we see how such as are greatest pretenders to reason, and to a higher flight then others this way are more visibly then any else of an *Atheistick Spirit*, and to be a length herein beyond any else on that design, how to weaken both their own assent, and others to the *Christian Faith*, and to render the same so far as possibly they can, to be problematick and doubtful; but it is sure here is nothing to stumble, but what may rather be *prentbning* to any of a serious spirit, and needs be no strange thing, when such are as tender as possible, to marr their enjoiments of this present life,

life, who hath no more; or to let their thoughts  
 come near to what must needs *torment* them *before*  
*the time*: whilst their *reason* serves them for such  
 an *use*, and constrains their conscience herein,  
 that they must either be *Christians in earnest*, or  
*none at all*, yea that under such bright discove-  
 ries of the truth of the Gospel, they must see it  
 is not *compatible with reason*, how there should  
 be a *mids* betwixt a truly *serious Christian*, who  
*beleeves, what he does professe*; and a *resolved*  
*Atheist* whose work lyes to have the dread of such  
 „ a *Faith* wholly extinguished. I knew a most  
 „ remarkable *Atheist* indued with special natural  
 „ accomplishments, who on the same account  
 „ said to a person of quality, if I did truly beleeve  
 „ what you profess to do, they are matters of so  
 „ great concern, that I do profess I could think  
 „ upon nothing else or be taken up thus, as the  
 „ most of Christians are, with the things of this  
 „ World; so as I cannot possibly credit you in  
 „ the Faith of your own Profession. And herein  
 can any exercise reason, and not see the *Faith of*  
*Christianity*, is another thing, then most this  
 day did ever conceive it to be, and a much higher  
 attainment, then a *Christians particular interest*  
 herein, for where the *first* is assuredly attained,  
 it may seem not possible, but the *other* must fol-  
 low, that mens greatest business of the earth,  
 should be to have a *sure evidence for Heaven*,  
 and to be ripening for so great a change. I have  
 known

known some whose tryalls, and conflicts in their warfare hath been extraordinary, and strange, who hath professed their highest releaf still lay herein, from the Faith of *divine truth* more then as to any particular promise made applicable to such a case, and would have sought no more to carry their spirits above the present temptations that occurred though they were not ordinary, or to be at rest as to all temporal events, but a more full strengthening in the *Christian Faith*, and that their Redeemer did live, since then they were in sure terms, as to their security for whatever he hath promised.

III. But I must add yet one thing further which seems indeed a prodigy, proper to such an age as this, that its become so hard a work to bring men living in the day light of the Gospel to a serious beleeving the truth, and existence of infernal spirits, and of their commerce, and traffick with this visible World; or to bring such who seem greatest pretenders to reason, to the Faith of Devils, lest they should thus be unavoidably brought to that Faith of the Devils, which is to beleeve, and tremble, which surely is an unconceivable and extream horror that these Apostate Spirits have herein, whilst their assent to the glorious beeing of God, to his attributes, yea to the truth, and History of the Gospel, is by such an inevitable constraint, that as there is no possible access for them to be Atheists, so is their dread, and

torment heightned beeing such *knowing intellectual*  
*essences*, as that power, and subtilty of *delusion*,  
 whereby they deal with mankind will not work  
 on themselves. This I must judge, to be the last  
 effort of the horrid wickedness of this present age,  
 to strenthen such a way, and since such a party  
 can have no help or support from *faith*, and *rea-*  
*son* herein, and yet find the assured truth, and  
 beeing of *Divels*, and of their communion, and  
 warefare with men, does marr any possible de-  
 fence or design for *Atheism*, and a taking off the  
 terror of ane *infernal state*, off their soul, they  
 must therefore move to another airth, which is  
 to *beleeve nothing but what they see and feell*, and  
 comes under a sensible demonstration to warrant  
 the same: for this is to make sure work at once  
 against the whole *Christian Faith*, and shut the  
 door on any way of conviction thence; thus  
 they keep a distance with the beeing of their own  
*souls*, as if it were some dark, and abstract no-  
 tion, because it comes not under their *sence*; they  
 can live at quiet, and be secure from the fear of a  
*Hell*, and *infernal world*, or exclusion out of  
*Heaven* untill they once meet with such an *argu-*  
*ment*, as to make them both *see*, and *feell* the  
 truth hereof; but oh they seeme not to apprehend  
 how sore the application of this *argument* will be,  
 when they at last find its in vain to reject the *con-*  
*clusion*, where the *premises* are sure. There is  
 one of late, who is come forth in the day light of

Chri:

Christianity, in a book lately published, to undeceive the World upon so great a delusion, as to these invisible powers of darknesse, and tho he seems to find it difficult how to annihilate, and make void wholly their existence, yet doth offer with a strange confidence to secure men from any fear of the molestations of such Spirits, and that all inward temptations or assaults of Satan, and his operating upon the souls of men, is but a deplorable fascination, and bewitchment, that the Christian Church hath been so long under. It might be judged, there were little need for such a worke to take this generation we are now in off all watch, and guard against these destroying adversaries, and to render them more secure herein, then they seem already to be; and that this confidence, must have some strange rise, to go forth not only in the most direct opposition to Sacred Truth, but to the universal Sence, and reason of mankind, except he hopes to find a numerous party, who hath given up with both, and will easily grasp at such a bait tho they should see the hook that will at last destroy them. But doe these mighty hunters, and destroyers of mankind the Divels, come so little speed in their work this day, that they must have a Protestant Minister of the Church come forth before the Sun to offer his assistance to help them forward herein, or if he deny such an intent, what security will he offer to secure men, from a hazard that's more dreadful then the killing



ling of their body, and is of an eternal concern; is he empoured with authority from these *infernal Regions*, I confels on these grounds he may have advantage to give such an assurance. 1. That the *strong man whilst he keeps the house*, vwill be very tender to trouble their peace over whom he swayes, with an uncontrolled Dominion, and that he will not affright, nor awake men out of such a pleasant dream, who hath set their heart wholly on the world, & whose portion is in this life, untill they be awaked for ever out of the same. 2. He may give full assurance also that the *Prince of this World* is at no war, nor needs be with such as are joined in with his interest, and at the same work to promote the *Kingdom of darknes*, and seeks not to have them tormented before the time. 3. But there is this ground, I must judge he specially goes on; that he will be easily credited on such a *Subject* as this, and knowes how small a *patrociny*, will serve to promote a design for *Atheism*, and could fall upon nothing, which would be more grateful to a great part now vwho bear the name of *Protestants*; but whilst he calls them to lay aside their *armour*, such as Christians are expressly called to put on *Ephes. 5: 11*. will he secure them when it comes to the *last battle*, and *conflict*, from their beeing seized by such *infernal Spirits* in their entry into another World, whom they did once deride, and that the *cruce* which was with them on the earth, will not break

up then : if he had restricted this *new discovery* to the world , of ane absolute security from the *Power of Satan* , and his *molestations* , to belong only to the *Place* , and *City he lives in* , it might have seemed to be on a politick interest , to render it , as a place of such eminent trade , to be the only safe , and most desirable part of the earth ; but he hath extended it to be universal to all other places , and to be a *Catholick good* , and *priviledge* . There needs no question , but that such a *person himself* must be in a deep quiet , and under no touch of these *assaults* and *temptations* others are exposed to ; tho one thing he may fear in the managing of so strange a design , and in such a manner , that these *knowing* and *active spirits* , for whom he *acts* , may not reckon their service much advanced , when there is as little of the *subtily of the Serpent herein* , as of the *innocence of the dove* . It is true there is an *invisible guard* , and *hedge* about each one of the Saints over which *Satan* cannot pass , but by the *measures of divine permission* ; nor is it expressible how much *Christians of the choicest spirits* are *bettered* , and *improven in their graces* by the *worst of spirits* , and in their continued warefare with them ; and its sure they are reserved in *chains of darkness to the Judgment of the great day* , but how far their *chain* is oft let forth , and enlarged in judgment to the world , may be too evident every where in the sad effects thereof , and it now  
appears,

appears, that their chain hath not been more remarkably lengthned out these many ages past, then in this day. I wish the *Writer of such a Book* might seriously repent, and so far retract what he hath published, as might thus turn such a poison unto ane *antidote against it self*, for I judge he durst not put such *Divinity* in his *Testament*, that he hath written in this *Book*.

## P O S T S C R I P T.

S I R,

**I**T may seem strange, not only the lengthning of this *Discourse* to far, but in insisting most specially upon that *Head of the internal Work*, and *Demonstrations of the Spirit of God on mens soul*; but as I may with humble confidence say this was under the sence of some *peculiar engagements* to such a *Subject*; so I shall make this further *Apology* for the same. 1. That since ever I accounted the *Profession of Christ a serious business*, I have judged it not conceivable how *Christians* should have ane assent to the truth of the *Gospel* or be at rest herein, untill it once be brought up to a full, and quieting assurance on that security, to which they must concredite themselves for ever, and thus know the strength, and sureness of the foundation of their Faith by its own evidence; that tho it be not yet full, whilst we are here in the way of enjoyment

joyment, yet is it undoubtedly full in the truth,  
 and certainty of evidence; I have judg'd it also  
 an addition to the greatest joy which I could have  
 within time, whatever might be a further streng-  
 thening to such a Faith, and hope we are called to by  
 the Gospel of Christ, so as not to lose any frag-  
 ment of this kind, which might tend to a more  
 full establishment, and does reckon this the cre-  
 dit, and glory of our Religion, that in no other  
 way it doth require acceptance of men, but with  
 a full assurance of understanding, and the furthest  
 conviction of evidence; as being designed no  
 less to found a rational certainty in the judgment,  
 then to determine the will or consent for embracing  
 the same; yea on this account it hath been oft  
 matter of astonishment, how in the teaching, and  
 ministerial work, which God hath appointed for  
 his Church, the primary truths of Religion should  
 not be more held forth to men with that clearness  
 of evidence and demonstration, as such great, and  
 marvelous things require, and the temper of this  
 age calls for; or how the great things of God, that  
 are of the highest consequence, and reality, can  
 have any possible reception from men by an im-  
 plicite or ordinarie assent; or whence it is, that with  
 most it seemes their work seems wholly sett on  
 the noetick, when so little on the dianoetick part of  
 Divinity: but on the other band I must also wit-  
 ness, that if ever I knew what it was to attain an  
 inward assurance of the truth, and revelation of  
 Christ,

Christ, and to be at rest herein; that the *eternal Son of God was revealed from Heaven in our nature to a lost man*, and that there is a *state of grace here, and of glory hereafter*; I have found that no *light, or conviction of judgment*, tho with such evidence as could leave no room for doubtfulness in the same, can effectually work without the *internal evidence, and demonstration of the Spirit of God*, and a supernatural power both to beget, and strengthen such a Faith in the soul; yea that without this, the furthest of *objective evidence* to cause irresistably a clear and rational assurance of divine truth, tho it were followed with a *dispensation of miracles*, will not quiet the Spirit of such, who under some deep exercise may be haunted with *bid, and dreadful temptations to infidelity*, until they know the truth of a *power, and evidence*, as goes above any *moral influence*. It is true this is not expressible to others, and they must *come and see*, who would know in what manner the Spirit of God bears evidence to his own truth, and what *strong impression his work hath on the internal Senses of a Christian*, yea what *piercing intelligences* are betwixt such, who surely know, and are partakers of a *divine life*, and their *blest Head* in this state of mortality, but if this were not known and sure, we might say an established Christian whose work is to *follow the Lord fully*, and adventure with assurance upon him, is such as might be sought

sought for here in the earth, but would not be found. 2. If I be perswaded of the *truth*, and *Excellency of Religion*, I must see this to be of as undeniable evidence, that it hath no true or solid interest in the Earth, but in the way of *tryal* and *experience* in it's power and efficacy on mens soull; and makes no reall ground or conquest, by an external profession, or can serve to *eternal ends*, until once that radical principle of *the life of God in the sou*l be understood; that choise company who are now going through time to the *Church triumphant* upon fresh and continued supplies of divine assistance, are these alone in whom the *Christian Faith* is kept alive this day on the earth, and it is one of the things I have thought most astonishing in the publick State of Religion, that in an *age*, when reason is so much pretended, men can design a *tryall* of the enjoyment of a *Heaven* for ever in another World, and yet hath not the same design on a personal tryall of the enjoyments of grace here, to know converse with God in the spirit, and the certainty of that trade and commerce, which is betwixt Heaven and Earth whilst we are yet on it, that are things so highly remote from all humane lence. 3. It hath prest me to insilt more on this *subject*, that this *way* is so visibly gathering strength, and seems to have the greatest prevalence now in the *Reformed Churches*, how to divide the *moral part* of our Religion in the duties and services thereof,

thereof, from its *internal and vital part*, loas this mortal contagion hath got in on the light and principles of this Generation, that if there were not an absolute assurance by the promise of God, we might fear truth and piety should quickly perish from the earth. Oh what a strange & prodigious opposition is this! against the whole *internal work & vitals* of that pure and excellent Religion; wherein both the comfort and glory of humane state lyes, & how is't conceivable men should be here capable of converse with God in the spirit, if there were not a conformity to him in the same kind by a *participation of the divine nature*; yea if [there were not so rare a being on the earth as the *new man, which is born of God*, and his immediate workmanship, which hath its peculiar growth & *vital acts* proper thereto, and in that sence as it is contradistinguished from the *old man cannot possibly sin it self*, tho it be formed in the heart of a sinner, and hath it's being therein, no more then the *life of God*, which is a partaking of the divine nature, can put forth any act of sin, but hath a continued conflict therewith; and thus tends to give the clear sence of that Scripture 1 John 5: 18. *we know that whatever is born of God sinneth not*, & Rom 7: 20. *It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me, nam unusquisque operatur secundum suam formam*; for if this stood not sure, the whole frame of experimental Religion, were an unaccountable riddle.



## A SECOND LETTER

*Wherein some Inquiry upon the times, and the work of Providence about the Church; but more specially with respect to the publick State of Britain and Ireland in this last age, is seriously designed.*

SIR,



may truly say, it did raise a special value and esteem on my spirit, to meet with one in such a day, who hath so great a weight and impression of the publick State of the Church, and a sense of the present times, so far above the ordinarie thoughts of men; when they seem so rare who look further then present things, either to what is past in these extraordinar times have gone over this Generation, or who hath another Judgment and Prognostication of what may be near, & yet before us, then from visible and natural causes. But though I must decline an answer to what you are pleased more particularly to propose, under a just sence of my unfitness herein, yet so far as I have attained in the matter of light upon a more general account with respect to the *Work of God in these*

*great changes past*, I am free to impart my self, and to offer humbly some few thoughts on such a *Subject*, which hath had most special evidence and weight on my spirit in the present day.

I. I doubt not you make the same Judgment, and reckoning of this with more advantage then I can reach, that one of the most choise and weighty exercises of a Christian, whilst he is within time, lyes in a *deep and serious observation of the times* he is fall'n in; not only with respect to the administration of Providence in humane affairs, but what does more eminently relate to the *Churches of Christ*, and where their lott is cast; since this is an essential part of Religion, as it's also one of the most choise of humane excellencies, to discern and *observe wisely* the ways of the Lord. But I can only shew you some of these things in a short touch, which I have found most engaging to such an Inquiry in this day. 1. That as each distinct *age* hath a proper *Talent* given thereto, under trust for observation of such events of Providence, wherein the name of God is more near unto men in any singular way, then in the ordinarie course of his actings, so hath the great *Author of time* choised to put a *higher Glory upon one age*, and *period of time*, then another, wherein it might be said that the measure of one is *five Talents*, as to more solemn appearances of the Majesty of God in his Providential Actings, when the measure of other times hath been this way

way but as *two Talents*. Such a differencing marke had that *age of the Churches coming out of Egypt*, beyond all which had gone before; yet was this comparatively little with respect to that glory, which was reserved to the *fulnes of time*, when our blest Redeemer did appear to the World. And it's clear how in these later times, that *age* which had it's first entry from the Year 1517. had a higher splendor put thereon, then had been known for a *thousand Years* preceeding the same; but when I have thought on the way and conduct of Providence, and marvelous discoveries of God herein to this Generation, I could not but see something in a most singular way of his appearance before the World to the same, as seems but yet little understood, tho this may be seen, that we have surely lived in an *age of wonders*

2. I have lookt on such an exercise, to *discern, and understand aright the times we are in*, as one of the most singular means for strenthning a *Christians Faith* on the certainty of sacred truth; when with these more immediate discoveries of God in the way and administration of grace by his spirit on mens soull, which is wholly hid from the World, they can see in what manner his truth does visibly take place, and is attested by an *external seall* in the glory of his work before men, and I am perswaded none thus did ever persue a more near acquaintance with God, but hath had some peculiar strenthning remarks of his way,

that have been hid from others, tho of a serious spirit otherwise. 3. It is such who have some greater weight of this choise study, and their spirits more fully join'd in therewith then others, who may attain more clear discoveries of light, for directing them to the *duties* and *work* of such a time; and on this account I fear that there is much yet this day in the dark to us, and not understood, what hath been the *Voice of the Lord* for answering the great ends of his Providence, tho it hath been clear and distinct, where mens spirits were laid open to entertain the same. I confess it is not strange as to the greatest part of men this day, tho they keep at the furthest distance from what might bring near an affecting sense of a Godhead to their soull in the ways of Providence, who are resolute not to see, or be perswaded of what doeth torment them hereby, whose great study is to *live without God in the World*, and seem emulous of these who can be most ingenious and expert, to confirm their hearts against all that is sacred. 4. But I am sure, it is something much higher then any interest of men or of Nations, or the greatest changes in the posture of humane affairs, which should bear the greatest weight in this exercise to understand the times we are in, and for a suitable obervation thereof, if men could once reckon that their great businels in the earth lyes with God, and in keeping sight of him in the outgoings of his Providence,

dence, since the *hidden wisdom of God in a Mystery* is to be seen and sought out in his *Works*, as well as in his *Word*; it's true *publick Revolutions*, and the fall and setting up of great men are things highly observable and momentous, but they are neither seen or understood, when they make not way for some greater sight of the *Majesty of God*, and the signal *retaliations of Judgement* herein, & what peculiar aspects such strange *Revolutions of Providence* hath on the *present Generation*.

II. Though it might seem unsuitable to offer any special *Remarks and Observations* upon this *late time*, to one of so discerning a spirit, of things of that nature; yet knowing how a mutual communication of light, about the *Work of God*, and his *actings* in our day, is so incumbent a duty, I shall point at a few things, wherein I have desired to admire and observe the way of *Providence* in this *remarkable age*, but in the first place more generally touch such a *Head*, ere I speak in some particular way thereto.

1. When we see the *series of these times*, and different measures of tryall and service assigned thereto, since that blessed rise, and recovery of the Church from Antichristian darkness, there might be seen also a *growing increase of light*, which in this *age* hath had such an advance, as it could not but be expected, that the Lord was to take some higher proofs of the improvements thereof

from this Generation then of these past, after such great things he had done for a full settlement of the *Reformed Churches*; when he had opened the *graves* of his people, and sent forth his *Prisoners by the blood of the Covenant*, & the truth had made way for its self over *mountains*, which once seem'd insuperable; yea when this also is an *age*, where in a great concurrence of the *Prayers of the Saints* in times before, was to meet for the Churches interest; so that, unanswerableness to the expectation of God herein, and to frustrate such eminent methods of grace, might expect some unusual work of Judgment to follow thereon, and the Lords coming at last to a judicial proces and procedure.

2. We see how these extraordinary occurrences of this *time past*, hath most remarkably had a joint respect both to *Sacred, and Civil Interests*, & *quoad Fata Ecclesie, & Imperii humani*, so as in that sense it might be said there hath been a *shaking both of Heaven and Earth*, as to the Churches visible State; yea such hath these *great changes* from the right hand of the most high been within the measure of *one age*, as men could not possibly see with the eye of reason, without amazement, tho it brings therewith one of the most dismal remarks of the present time, if mens spirits be not seited with a deep and awful sense of the tremendous Majesty of God herein, and know there is no stability of humane state this day in the earth.

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but from him alone, who can bring judgement on the greatest *Nations*, or *Persons*, above the common course of nature, and influence of second causes: but oh what intertainment should a dilatation of *Miracles* find from the spirits of men now, when the *Revelation of Christ*, and *Redemption by his Blood* from Eternal Wrath, hath no greater effects on this *Generation*, and so few awak'd with the Glory of such a light.

3. When I have considered this *age*, as that which might have been judged a time of great expectation for a further advance of the *Kingdom of Christ* in the World, which does specially make a time more remarkable, yet how little access hath been herein to see the *Work of God* in any new planting of *Churches*, or inbringing of *Nations* to the Profession of the Gospel, as hath been formerly, but instead of new Conquest, rather a losing ground, and is a difficult part become to maintain a *defensive work* in behalf of the truth, and which may be a serious remark that in this *age*, one tribe hath as it were been cut off from the Reformed Churches; I mean as to that dismal State of *Bohem*, where some time before had been so eminent and flourishing a plantation; it is true there hath been a solemn tide of the effusion of the Spirit of God, allotted to some of the Churches in this last age, that should be still matter of sweet remembrance, but it's sure this day we see the ebb as low in these places, in the life and power of



Religion, and no visible reviving almost any where can be heard of the *Churches of Christ*; which yet hath been to me so far a hopeful sign of a near *incalling of the Jews*, since it will then find the *Gentile Church* in so judicial a Period of time, that it shall be as *life from the dead*.

4. Yet it is sure on the other hand there hath been most signal honor and glory put on this *age*, and with a special respect to *Britain and Ireland*, in as great a harvest of serious and solid Christians by the Power of the Gospel, then hath been in any time or place of the Earth, since the first *three Centuries*; tho not under that seal of Martyrdom as was after the Reformation, yet such who shined in the truth and power of true Sanctity, and have left a fragrant Savour and remembrance to this day, when most of that blessed stock is now gone, and their room rarely filled up any where.

5. Yea this further may be matter of sweet *Reflection*, how many such hath been in this *age*, in whom that ancient greatness of spirit with Heroick motions in appearing for God, and his truth might be seen; for tho they attained not to the *measure of the first three*, of our first and blessed Reformers, yet may it be said, within the limits of this *age*, there hath gone off the stage innumerable instances of such eminency of induements, and with that measure of power, and of a sound mind, as might be compared with any of the

the *Antients* since the *Apostolick times*; and this is a remark that never fails of Christs imparting himself in these measures of his spirit to a *Church* in such a time, according to the great ends he is to accomplish there.

6. Though great changes upon a Nation or Church, does not want previous and remarkable warnings from the Lord, we have seen with what a marvelous *Surprisal* these have occurred to this Generation, that were most remote from all humane thoughts, and once not conceivable upon the highest principles of reason, how ever they should have taken place. It is becoming the Majesty of God, to have his *Arcana Imperii*, in such peculiar and reserved cases, as the most skilled in the ways and depths of Providence are called to be still with a silent admiration, when he thus does arise, as in these times past, to do great things which was not looked for.

7. But how strange and marvelous hath the *surprisalls* been of Providence in our day also in the way of tenderness, and mercy, as well as of Judgment, which should be a most strengthening remark, if this had been more suitably improven; what unexpected and seasonable interpositions have been of a divine immediate power, in extreme exigences, both of the Church, and particular Christians, in these great changes past; and as Oppressors have grown up to a height of Violence, how observably have Carpenters been prepared,

pared, whence humane reason could not have fore seen to cut the *horns* of such.

8. When we can not but see with what a signal evidence and commission, the spotless Judgment of God hath gone forth in these late times, to all ranks and stations of men, especially in the *Isle of Britain*, there might be also some peculiar remembrance of it's design against these, who were of the *high best Staie*, so as no time past did ever tend more to *seall instruction* on the spirits of great men then of late, to have the fear and dread of God on them, when *Princes might have been seen walking on foot, and Servants riding on horseback*; yea that there is a time of *Gods making inquisition for blood*, of such who seemed most secure from humane Power, and how this alone comes from a divine hand, when men are *poisoned in their own cup*, and lays a snare to themselves by which they are caught; it is true a clear *application of Providences past*, to the *present times*, is not easily attained, but I doubt not of a more full light and discovery for this end, as will silence all oppositions, that have been to the intent and Counsell of the Lord in these things which have occurred.

9. It hath been reserved to our day, to see the *Issue*, and *great Decisions*, which have been in these strange *Scenes of Providence*, in this age past, and to have them now in our sight in the whole successive course thereof, and surely this might be a great and affecting sight to such who  
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are ready to think that God hath forsaken the earth, and walketh only in the circuit of Heaven, when they cannot but see what amazing events hath been of late brought forth by an invisible and unpreventable conduct of Providence; and to see also in this late Revolution of the publick State of *Britain*, how by one *great surprisal*, the whole *Popish Measures* there which had been of so long and painful a contrivance, was as in a moment broke and made void, when nothing less expected.

10. It is unquestionable, that the Lord does usually act by *second causes*, but there are steps also of his way wherein he alone appears, and will have them seen to be wholly his work, & this now hath eminently appeared in the great transactions of these *late times*, how beyond any humane power or might, it was a *Standard by the Spirit of God lifted up*, that did visibly make way for the work he was then accomplishing, and did serve such terror on his Adversaries; yea how these who were acted forth to be instrumental thus on the service of their day, were directed for that great end to the *quieting of his Spirit* in such a piece of his Work.

11. And herewith what thoughts of heart may it cause now in the present state and juncture of things, to see such a *Conjunction* in this *Western Part of Europe*, to serve the great ends of Providence, that if it had been told our Fathers by any,

any, they would have been as such who mock, that in the next age, the *House of Austria*, of *Spain*, *Lorrain* and *Savoy*, should have a joint interest with the greatest *Princes of the Reformed Religion*, and take the Sword with one consent against such a Party, whose Sword hath been bathed, and yet still is reaking in the blood of the Protestants, yea how this great instrument of Judgment, and *Patron of the Romish Interest* should most actively make way to defeat his own Projects and Counsel, by an irresistible conduct of Providence.

This is a great and unusual *Conjunction* in humane affairs, such as the Policy of the *Western Part of Christendom* is hereby cast in a new mould, wherein we are called to adore God, and his Dominion over all *Second Causes*; tho it be a *Depth of Providence*, which is yet not opened up; only herewith some *Reflections* on the same I cannot wholly pass. 1. What may be too justly feared of an inordinate respect to men, and concurrence of visible means, above what it can bear, when nothing is more effectual to cause the greatest humane succor miscarry, and sink under this weight, the relyances thereon, as if they could stand by themselves, without keeping in with God alone, with that God, who is of infinite Power both to hurt & help, whose presence is ever the Highest Security of a *Nation*, tho the whole World were against them. 2. But this also looks with confidence & hope, that

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the Lord is near to give some extraordinary demonstration of himself by *Providences*, as this Generation shall not get their eyes shut at, yea that this strange piece of his work, is a prelude and entry on a revolution of the publick State of the World, that shall be of a higher extent, then may be apprehended by most, and it's sure when he does begin, he will also make an end. 3. I have lookt on this remarkable *silence*, and *suppence* as to any publick Decision of Providence, *this Year past*, when things seemed to be in the highest *expectation* of a *Crisis*, that hereby the Lord would yet give men time to consider his Work, and take to heart his Voice by such a further *warning*; and have still observed from the records of times past, as to his Procedure, that when he was to bring forth some great piece of his Work before the World, there hath been as it were an interval of silence for a time, & like some *Cessation* of Providence, which hath preceeded the same, and made the time of his *Working*, when it was lest mens *Expectation*; yea the longer a stroak hath been when it came, the longer hath a tender forbearance gone before, even when the *hand of Justice* hath been lift up, the *wheels sometimes stand still*, and the publick state of affairs is in a strange manner becalm'd when the Lord is in some eminent manner to arise according to that *Isay 42: 14. I have long time holden my peace, I have been still, I have refrained my self, now will I cry*

*I cry as a travelling Woman &c. 4.* Yea it may be a special remark, that when the Lord hath so signally appeared to make this great revolution in Britain effectually, and to clear the sky and coast there from visible opposition, with such rare preventing Providences for that end, yet is so little ground gained by the unite strength of this Confederacy, but it was in the one that the Lord did act in an extraordinary way of Providence, in the other things doe run more in the ordinarie channel of visible means. It looks as a sign of great Wrath, that such an Instrument of Judgment hath had his chain so far let forth in this day, who might be called not only *Hostis Ecclesiae*, sed *humani Generis*, by these cruelties more then inhumane exercised in the *Palatinate*; and other Parts of *Germany*, but it's fitt the World should know of what spirit and way the great Persecutor of the Protestants in this age is; yea for the Nations about to see there is no possible Moral Security for their Civil Interests from one whom no establishments of Laws, nor that Law of Gratitude towards such whose Fathers had brought the *House of Bourbon* to the Throne could bind: but as there is an appointing and establishing men for judgment, whose hand is made strong untill that work be perfited, so is the Sin of Britain, and other Reformed Churches, the greatest strength of this Adversary.

12. Have we not also been called to see  
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such *viciſſitudes of Providence*; that theſe for whom God had ſometimes moſt ſignally appeared in raiſing them to the higheſt greatness and power, as all might clearly diſcern it was his hand alone, that did the ſame; how in a way no leſs wonderful he hath made known his power in breaking and bringing them low, whilſt they did not know, and regard God in the day of their greatness but thought to ſtand by themſelves, and gave ſuch a requital to him, as to betake themſelves to another ſtrength, then that which raiſed them, and try a new Scene of oppoſition to his truth, and intereſt; yea thus forgot the tempeſt they were once in, and theſe engagements, which were then on their ſoul, when they had once got to the *Haven*: It is ſure this hath been writ forth, as in *Capital Letters* once and again, that men who run might read the ſame, and know how great and terrible a party God is, when he is not for a Church or People, but againſt them; and how eaſie it is for him by ane occurrent of Providence, leaſt feared or thought off, to give a check to the greateſt deeps of humane Policy and Wit; and let ſuch know, when they judge themſelves ſecure from any hazard on the earth, there can be no ſtanding, when their counſels and confidence is derided from Heaven.

13. It hath been in ſome ſingulare manner alſo, that in this age we have been called to ſee ſin and judgment meet other with ſuch aſtoniſhing

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circumstances, and so visible a *resemblance* and *proportion* betwixt the same, as the *stroke* herein *pointing as with a finger at the cause*, was unavoidable for a *natural conscience* to discern, and see a *just* and *Holy God*, thus made known, and visible in such *publick* and *tremendous instances* of *his Judgment*, as beyond the rate of *former times* have been *set up*, as *beacons* in our sight. I must join herewith, this *sad remark*, which hath had a peculiar respect to these times, that as it's sure nothing, but *Religion* in the truth thereof can effectually take off men from *sin*, so hath nothing, so much as *Religion* been oft made use off as the *grand Engine* to secure them therein; and what was spoke by one of the *Ancients*, hath been more applicable to our *day*, then almost any past, that *never was ane age more fertile of Religions under a different profession hereof*, and *never more barren of Religion in the power, and efficacy* of the same on *mens soul*.

14. It hath been in this *age* that such a call often and *aloud* hath sounded in our ears to come and see, how the *greatest Powers and Nations* of the earth are but as a *little dust* in the *balance* for the *Soveraigne God* to blow off at his pleasure, and that he hath reserved to himself a *dominion*, and *preeminence* over the *Kingdoms* of the *Children of men*, to change the *greatest Monarchies*. Oh what a *strange reflex work* might this be to have our spirits, but *going back on the*

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great and marvelous shakings, and utter razing hath been of publick settlements that seemd most firmly laid, the bowing down and fall of the greatest of men, and raising up such, who had been low, when the great God once begun to contend with the Oaks and Cedars, and herewith to see the extent of his power over mens spirits and inclinations, as well as their actings, so as to determine their concurrence, with their hand for his ends; contrare to the native byass, and sway of their hearts; that men might know him who is the God of the spirits of all flesh can by one and the same Providence accomplish various designs at once, and bring forth such contrare effects, as no humane wisdom could ever have supposed or foreseen, yea how these marvelous events might be clearly seen, was in their day no rare and strange contingencies to astonish men, but such as did bear a most evident signature and impress of the Majesty of God, and of his name and truth shewed forth thereon.

15. I shall but add this more upon so boundless a Subject; that we have been specially called in this age to see some unusual variation in the spotless ways and methods of Providence about his Church, and in the cours of humane affairs from what hath been the manner of his working formerly, so as men could not discern his way oft by any footsteps or precedent of Providence in times past, but that something hath been reserved peculiarly to our

*day, of the Lord rising up as in mount Peradfin, and his being wroth as in the valley of Gibeon to do his strange work, and bring to pass his strange Act* *Iſay 28: 21.* And tho we but ſee in part hereof, yet may we now know and underſtand upon theſe *times paſt*, more then ſuch who was then *preſent actors on the ſtage* could reach in diſcerning the *intents of providence* when things were in their *firſt mould*, as is now clear in their *after tendency and reſult*; nor could poſſibly have that judgment of the *Work of God in ſome parcels* as may be now attained, when it's in a more full and entire *frame*; when ſuch a ſight is ſett before us, as ſhould call to have our ſouls bowing down with an *awful regard and homage* at ſo *auſt*, and immediate a *diſcovery of the Maieſty of God* in his *Work and actings before this Generation.*

*A III. Head on this Subject*, that I would offer ſome thoughts on, is as to the *Lords ſingular way of dealing with the publick State of Britain, and Ireland* beyond any other of the *Reformed Churches* in this *laſt age*; and is indeed a *Subject of ſerious regard*, to conſider what *manner of time* hath our lot been caſt in, and the *meaſure of that talent for obſervation*, we ſtand accountable for upon ſuch great and extraordinary *events* as hath occurred: but here I have deſired to have my thoughts *translate*, to what hath been from the *firſt entry* on ſo marvelous a *ſeries of providence*, about the ſtate of theſe *Nations*, for almoſt *fifty*  
*Years*

*Years past*, for a more clear prospect how each step herein in its *successive place*, and room, hath tended to give *light* to another; which I shall restrict wholly to the more *immediate appearances* of God, from what hath been *men's part*, and actings upon such a *diversity of interests* as might too visibly be seen to influence many in their way; and offer but a few serious reflections on the same, to one who can more clearly *observe*, and discern things of that kind.

1. That it's sure *Britain and Ireland* hath been of late a Theater of such strange and extraordinary vicissitudes in it's publick state, from the Year 38. of this age, as in no times past can be resembled; what wonderful *Revolutions* did then successively follow other, and were made the *object of mens sense*, as could not possibly have had credit or been a matter of *Faith*, if the same should have been foretold, and may justly render such a *period of time* unto this day, to be matter of astonishment to any of a serious spirit. It is true there is no time wherein the Lord hath not given some more singular discoveries of himself, and these changes of providence which are in the *personal case of Christians*, and lyes more close and near to their *Sense*, then things of a *publick concern*, are oft so extraordinary as would be not easy for others to credit; but it must be said what we have seen here, and may know of the work and appearance

rances of God in that *Land* can never be a *Subject* of ordinary thoughts.

2. It is known how an *avenging Sword*, which was bathed in *Heaven*, had it's commission thence, to go forth against both *Britain*, and *Ireland*, and did not cease to pursue it's end until these flourishing *Nations*, was made a visible field of blood, yea did not rest, until in the righteous, and Sovereign disposal of God, a potent and settled *Monarchy* there, of a long descent having no fear, or opposition from any *forren power*, was yet broke, and made void, and did fall in their high places; and what an account this should have been to the World, if it could have been possibly seen or judged in the Year 40. what the 50 Year following was to bring forth, and was then in the bosome of so short a time.

3. But when thus the Lord did once appear, and go forth in a *judiciary way*, we might see how each of these three *Nations* had their proper share, and measure allotted in the strokes, and judgments of that time, tho in some different method and manner; there beeing a more singular part assigned to poor *Ireland* then, by the Holy and just God in that bloody and terrible Scene, which was acted there, yet this was in common to the whole of these *Lands* that it was an intestine *Sword*, and not of a *forreiner* that was then call'd for, which spoke

spoke the *Judgment* to be the *lorer* and more of divine wrath in it; where on part of a Nation, is made the *rod*, and executioner of *his judgment* on another, and their *destruction* from amongst themselves.

4. If it be considered, what *manner of time*, that was of so *extraordinary things*, it may be obvious, how this followed a *long and unusal settled calm*, and *tranquillity*, which had gone before in the *publick Staté of these Nations*, when so great a *flame* had been round about; it was immediately after a *bloody Sword* had done its work in *Germany*, which from the *Year 30.* had brought with it such *dismal effects* there; but what would seem most *astonishing* here, that tho a *time of the patience and long suffering of God*, had in a *singular manner* gone before, & the *treaty of the Ghospel* might be seen to have a small acceptance, and such *judicial effects*, with most of that *Generation*, when the *Red Horse*, and its *Rider* went forth to *take peace* from such a part of the *earth*, yet was not the *hight of Profanity, and Atheism* nor *measure of sin* then in *these Nations* come near to such a *degree*, as is now the *measure of this time*, or had any such *prodigious appearance*; only we see not yet what is *coming to answer this*.

5. It is not above *40 Years past*, since we might see a *powerful state, & commonwealth* both raised and formed in *these Nations* on so great a *ruine*, had



gone before, and thus such a new and wonderful *Scene of Providence* brought forth on the stage, which made a *Revolution in the civil state* of that nature as *Britain* had never before known; a *State* whose strength whilst it stood firm was made formidable both by *Sea and Land* to the Nations about, with so strong a tide of success, as nothing was able to stand against the same, but all essays, which tended to an *opposition* then, most visibly frustrate, and no plots, or mine laid so deep and close, which did not spring upon themselves who wrought therein; such was the concurrence of favourable things, and in so strange a manner until they had stood out that tryal wherein they were then sett, how they should answer the call, and intent of such a Providence.

6. But when the eyes of most every where was aloft, as to the issue of this settlement, and all humane contrivance, or forecast put to a stand herein, on what side the *ballance* might cast amidst such different Parties, and interests as was on foot; it was then as with an amazing earthquake, that the whole foundation was razed, and tho it was unquestionable that many of a serious spirit, and design in the things of God was amongst such, yet whilst the date of their commission was once expired, and kepted not themselves in the way of mercy, they are at last brought to know what it was to have God against them; a God impartially baring sin before whom it is more highly

rful aggravate and provocking the higher Profession  
 ge, of his way and truth men stands under, yea then  
 that was it that it might be no less clearly seen, how in  
 state the same manner of their raising, by a most visible  
 for series, and irresistible course of Providence, so  
 ions was there fall, and down casting made wonder-  
 ing ful; there Councils disordered, dispirited in  
 ys, their resolutions wherein the ebb did run as low,  
 bly in impressions of fear and despondency on their  
 and spirits, as it had once lowed, who some-  
 who times before they knew what it was to be acted  
 fa- above their own ordinarie reach; and thus as in a  
 til moment might it be seen how this frame and  
 ere mould was broke as with out hand. This was the  
 nd second overturning in the publick State of Britain,  
 in a very short time after the former, answerable  
 as to that Ezek. 21: 27. *I will overturn, over-*  
 u- turn, &c.

7. It is now that a great, and marvelous  
 a- change we may see again go over these Nations, &  
 as an other piece of the Work of God brought forth on  
 th the stage, and new Actors made use of herein;  
 nd which caused great thoughts of heart to know,  
 us what aspect such a crisis might have on the publick  
 n- State of Religion; then was the Regal Power, and  
 on Government in Britain, raised again to its highest  
 in splendor and extent, and this change in such a  
 w manner accomlisht as the most judicious, and  
 discerning spirits stood amased to see over what  
 ly oppositions, and difficulties, which seemed insu-

perable, this was carried; and that surely it was the *same hand who threw them down*, which did then *lift them up*, with whom it is easie to make a *way where there is none* for any peece of his *Work*, when he goeth forth herein.

8. But when it might have been hoped and expected such *extraordinaire providences* should work on *these who were most interested in this great Restauration*, when it was not there *Sword* or *Counsel*, but the *finger of God*, which wrought the same; and that surely this might put a more then ordinaire weight how to *restore the Nations unto God*, who had *restored them to the supreme Power, and Government* over the same, loe then was it in the *Room hereof* that these things might be seen. 1. How the *Sluces* were immediately *let open*, for an *impetuous flood*, and *deluge* of *wickednesse* to break in over the whole *Isle*; and *unbridled licence* to all *immoralities*, and *impiety*, and no restraint but what might tend to promote the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ* amongst men; so as these *Years past* since the 60. hath tended to lay a *lod of guilt on Britain* beyond the *measures of anytimes past*, and is *still lying upon the same*, which will be found *sore and heavy* in the issue if *Soveraign Grace* do not wonderfully interpose.

2. As it was then that such a *crisis* had so dismal and mortal an aspect there ~~was~~ these heights of *Profanity* vvhich did go over *all banks*, & beyond an *ordinaire cure or relief*, so there might be

seen a *new way* and *unusual methods* of sinning; and a new progress, and advance in *Atheism*, beyond what hath been known in any times past, yea this with such confidence in the publick light, and before the *sun* as might be an amazement even to the internal spirits to think how far they were out gone by such who were of humane race this way. 3. But it was herewith also, when it might have been thought, that *God should stay his hand* no longer or forbear, that the *scall of their commission*, whose power had then the *greatest influence* might be discernable to all; that they were assuredly *established for judgment*, and had such a judicial work under their hand; so as the most *destructive designs* of that party for a further *Ruine to the Church*, seemed still then to have the greatest success; and no attempts or oppositions whatsoever could withstand the same or stop it's course, until their *measure*, and the *Epha* was further filled up, but such who did most *hasten to brake prison* as it were *before the time*, found their *bondage grew stronger* hereby.

9. But whilst such was thus at work, and acting so dismal a part on the publick *Theater of Britain*; lest they should reckon that *surely God had forsaken the earth*, and that the Cry of such prodigious wickedness was not so loud as to go up to *Heaven*; then was it that he came down in a *visible way*, to make himself known, and bring near his judgment

ment, with a very tremendous voice; then was it that he gave a special commission to one of the three great Judgments the devouring Pestilence to go to the most eminent and conspicuous part of Britain, and the publick Seat of the Regal Power and Authority; and make that great City desolate for a time, and make their dwellings void of Inhabitants, in the Year 65. yea in an extraordinary Conjunction did double such a warning by putting them in a flame, that it might speak as a publick Herald to these Nations, and thus give a Second Cry, that when his Wrath was begun to kindle a little, men might meet him in the way of his Judgment ere it come to the utmost, and a greater wo follow thereon. This surely was the voice of God by a most stupendous dispensation, and does speak still to this day, tho there may be few now to hear it. This was a Entry of Judgment, and stroke of that kind on which the Lord did put a most discernable impress of his Greatness, and Terror.

10. Yet even then after this there was a most observable Pause, and tender forbearance, in the way of the Lord to bring Judgment a further length; the God of Patience, who does not easily destroy the Work of his own Hand, and bears long ere a hight of sin does extort the last Stroke of Vengeance, did then give such a new breathing, or long intermission, as to any extraordinary Acts of Judgment; but did herewith

send

send new Offers, and Conditions of Peace, before the decree bring forth Zephan 2: 2. so as the next great warning, which was given to these Nations, was in an other way and method; to take a new tryall how this yet would work by a most rare preventing Providence, in the discovery of the Popish Plot, which under the shadow of civil Authority had been so long hatching, and ripening until this mine was ready to spring, to a visible Ruine of the whole protestant Interest in these Nations. This was a singular step of Divine Providence, tho the sence hereof may be gone off the Spirits of most, wherein he made us see that he was yet still watching over these Lands for their good, when they were not aware and would not only warn, by so awaking a Providence, but turn that contrivance against the contrivers, if so this might at last Work, and answer the intent hereof.

But now I must further add, what lyes nearer to our sight and observation, upon this extraordinary course, and Conduct of Providence from the Year 60. to that late call we have been sisted under, to see what the Year 88 following did bring forth; and here to fix our thoughts with a deep advertency, on this strange sight and turn of providence; which the most wise Discerners could not some time before, have ever suppoed on principles of Reason, or by any natural connection of things; a turn, and vicissitude of Providence of such a kind where men may see the Name & Majesty of God,  
in

in some *august*, and *singular way* shewed forth  
thereon, and his arising to make way for his  
Power and *immediate Appearance* in such a man-  
ner as had not been known in former times.  
This is indeed a peece of the *Work of God* that  
might bring near the *Sense of a Godhead* to the  
conscience of the most ordinarie Observers, and  
what ever sad, and *Judicial signs* be too evident  
this day of the improvment made by most here  
of, yet should it deeply concern us, that the  
*Glory and Honor of God* in so great a *discovery* of  
himself be not *darkned or obscured*. This is a  
*Work* vve see but *in part*, and the *first Scene*, of  
vvhath is yet further in bringing forth, and can be  
little known or taken up by the nearest *events* of  
Providence untill the *Vision-Speak*, and the vail  
be further taken off the same: but it is here  
that these of the most prejudged Spirit at such a  
Providence hath been constrained to see, that this  
vvas by an *immediate divine Hand*, contrare to  
the ordinary *Course*, and *Actings of Second Causes*,  
and how such vvhose most eminently acted as *In-*  
*struments* herein, vvhath ever access or advan-  
tage, they had of *Resolution*, *Spirit*, and *Coun-*  
*sel* in such a Work, yet vvere then only called  
forth to stand still, and see a *higher Power* moving  
in the same, vvhose did there *look down as in the*  
*morning watch* to trouble the *Motions of these*, who  
were against them, and in an instant took off their  
*Chariot wheels*, and made them know it vvas in  
vvain,



forth, either to *stand*, or *flee*, vwhen they had  
 or his *God against them*, who tho they reckoned to go  
 man *orth*, as at *other times* they knew not, that their  
 times *day*, and fatal *period* vvas now come.

Tho there was nothing common or ordinarie in  
 this *stupendous work*, wherein such *incredible*  
 and *occurrences of providence*, did then concurr as  
 might constrain the *naturall conscience* of men to  
 here see a *supernaturall causality* herein yet did some-  
 things *speciallie*, meet here to render this *Work*  
 of *God* more highly *astonishing*. 1. That when  
 the fears of most were at the furthest hight of so-  
 me *desolating stroke* to accompanie the same,  
 where the *contrare parties*, were so stated as the  
 one could not *stand* but on the *ruine* of the other,  
 and their interest on every side so *extensive*, and  
 great, yea when in no times past the *harvest* of  
 the *earth*, and in these parts thereof, seemd more  
 ripe for putting in the *Syckel*, yet even then did  
 the *Lord* in his soveraign and marvelous disposal  
 spare; and went not forth as at other times, with  
 garments rolled in blood nor did the *actings* of his  
 providence appear so terrible as when *presages* of  
 judgment were more discernable; but as this was  
 the opening of the *first scene* & who sees what *God*  
 is to do, who knowth his mind, as to these great  
 changes in the *externall state* of this western part  
 of the *World*, by such a remarkable entry to the  
 same; but this may be fully clear to any who *does*  
*wisely consider the Work of the Lord* herein, that  
 this

this was a *new* and *higher* tryall which he would  
 yet once more take of *these nations*, and did there-  
 fore hold his hand, when the stroke seemd ready  
 to fall down. 2. It might seem unaccountable to  
 all reason, such a conjunction, and concurrence  
 of instruments as was in this work; for cho the  
 appearance of some herein who did most eminent-  
 ly appear, and act, did witness *spaciall*, *high*, and  
*heroick motions* in the same; yet how *vast & nume-*  
*rous* a part was imbarcked upon this interest, and  
 in behalf of the *Protestant Religion*, who could  
 claime no roome or title in the very form, and vi-  
 sible profession of *Christianity*; or to have any place  
 in the outter court; but it might here with amaze-  
 ment be seen how upon the *one side*, were such  
 stated, who maintaind *Christs bodily presence* in  
*the earth*, in that sacrifice of the mass, as the *Shib-*  
*boleth* of their profession, and on the *other side* how  
 great a part was there who did ridicull all revealed  
*Religion*, and seemd not to beleeve his *reall presence*  
*in heaven*. But here was it discernable what a  
 return this was by the voice of providence, to  
 that *grand engine*, and too known a *design* of the  
*Romish spirit* for many years past, to take vway  
 for popery, by *destroying men*, especially the youth  
 in *Britain*, in the *moralls* of *Christianity*, and to  
 to take thus off all serious *Sense*, and weight of  
*Religion* from their *Conscience*, that herein this  
 deep of *Hellish Policy* did at last *ruin* against  
*themselves*, and tho they judged themselves  
 secure

secure from any *serious* influence of Religion on such a *Party*, yet could they not secure them from *acting as men on principles of reason*, who could not but see the interest of Popery, and of their *civil Rights*, and *Properties* were incompatible; yea that tho they were acted from no *internal motives* on a *Religious Interest*, it could not be easie to join in with such a *Religion*, as was made up wholly of *external Rites*, and *ceremonial Severity*, and *Strictnesse*, and had no possible *consistency* with it self. But if we seriously ponder this *great vicissitude of Providence* in it's *Conjunction*, with what hath gone before, it's here we must see a *thrid*, *marvelous overturning*, which in one and the same *age*, hath been *successively in these Kingdoms*, according to that fore-mentioned Scripture Ezek. 21: 27. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn, and it shall be no more until he come, whose right it is, and I will give it*: which is to be understood there, of such *great Revolutions*, as should in their proper order follow upon other. For tho this had a respect, then to these *great shakings* which was to come upon *Juda*, and the *House of their Kings* in the entry of their *captivity*, yet may none bound the intent of the *Holy Ghost* in this Prophecy, as if there only it was to take place, and had not a *Respect* to some further accomplishment of the same in after times, which surely was since, never more clear in the event then in this late

*wonderful Series of Providence*, that hath been in these *overturnings*. But now let me speak herewith, what hath been sometimes *deeply affecting*, how there is something yet more *solemn and extraordinary now in this thrid call*, then all that hath gone before, to be *awakening to this generation*, and that which with too clear evidence may be judged the *last cry and call*, such as hath no *dark or uncertain sound* therewith to the *State and Churches of Britain*, and unto all *ranks* there, if there be not a resolute shutting of our ear at the same, that this is assuredly the voice of the Lord,

„ *I will yet once more take proof and tryall of these*  
 „ *Lands, which I did choise*, and in so singular  
 „ a way deall with beyond other Churches and  
 „ Nations; and will yet respite the last stroak of  
 „ Judgment; and if tenderness and forbearance  
 „ in a most surprising and extraordinary display  
 „ thereof will once work; if the actings of pro-  
 „ vidence such as could not of late have been be-  
 „ leev'd by men will once reclaim, and return  
 „ Britain and Ireland again unto God, I will  
 „ then take of both their fetters and fears, and  
 „ give a new settlement to their civill rights and  
 „ interest, will sease their adversaries with terror  
 „ and trembling, and yet spare their blood; will  
 „ sett such also upon the *Throne*, who shall seek  
 „ the good and welfare of their People, under  
 „ whose shadow ye may ly down safely with-  
 „ out dread either of the terrors by night or such

affrightments by day they were once under ;  
 and take off any fears of external force. But  
 oh if this *voice* can not be *heard*, when it is so  
*clear* and *audible* which if some knew ever any  
 thing, or had discerning of the ways of God and  
 of the *times*, they cannot but *hear*, this to be the  
*present voice* of the time, it then seems to be  
 come to the *last* and *highest* tryalls that these *Na-*  
*tions* ever stood under ; when such extraordinary  
*measures* of *divine* patience, and *long* suffering,  
 and so long a day given to repent must either be  
*speedily answered*, or it be found that the *stroke*  
 will be the more terrible, when it comes, the  
 longer it hath been deferred ; that threatned judg-  
 ment shall assuredly at *last* come to a year of re-  
 compence, yea to a precise day of the *spotless Ven-*  
*geance* of God, when his spirit will no more strive  
 with men, when he will clear his Justice, and go  
 forth to see the *Authority* of his *Laws* and *Sen-*  
*ences* of his *Word* ratified in the execution thereof,  
 when no *Intercessor* shall be then heard tho a  
*Noach*, *Daniel*, and *Job* were upon the earth ;  
 and it shall be then no more possible to hold off  
 that long threatned *stroke*, or turn Judgment out  
 of his way then for men to stop the *course* of the  
*Sun* to recall the *day* and *years* that are past, or  
 make void the *Ordinances* of *Heaven*, but then  
 will the *Works* of God gett a hearing, when his  
*Words* could not.

*A IV. Head, on this subject; which I must join in with the former, that is of great weight, and consequence, is this; to know what aspect, such extraordinary providences of these times past, now hath on the churches there, and whither so great a crisis, as hath been in the publik State of affairs, hath more promising, or threatening signs, therewith. It was the highest part of Hezekiah's observation, upon that great deliverance he met with Isai. 39. not to see only God in his immediate hand herein, but how his heart, was toward him in the same; as is there expressed thou hast loved my soul, out of the pit of corruption, for so does the originall render it. A loosing sight of providence, in what the Lord doth speak to men thereby, maketh way not only for great shakings, but to read the sense thereof, contrair to its intent; and tho there be a regarding by all, the visible effects of providence, and what herein lyes nearest to our sense, yet few goes a further length in their observing. It is undenyable that an extraordinary condescendence of grace, and of the long suffering of God, might be seen in these great things here done of late, but the next enquiry lyes here, how such an unusual application of providence does work: It was upon some serious thoughts hereof, and this present State of things, I sett myself, for more clear discerning of the way of the Lord and his voice to this generation in these astonishing*  
*changing*

*changes* hath gone over the same *of late*, to have my own spirit fix'd herein, and some higher strengthening on the faithfulness of his truth; but in the first place, there are some undoubted principles of truth, which I would mention here, and must hold by, as truths which are of an eternal verity, and may have a clear applicatory light, to the present day we are in.

1. That it's sure, the most notable mercies which hath been bequathed of the Lord, either to churches, or persons, have also been an entry to the greatest of judgements, when not answered, it was with the brightest sunshine of an immediate appearance of his hand, and an extraordinary course of miracles, that Israel, entred into the wilderness; whereon so black a night of dismal providences did fall; and is it not the same voice which is now speaking to us, that we have *Malach. 2. 2.* if ye will not lay to heart, to give glory to my name, says the Lord of host, I will curse your blessings.

2. It stands ever sure, and unchangeable, that God will never return to a people, against whom he is wroth, untill the cause of his departure be taken away, for both the same date, and measure, which mens forsaking of God, doth bear, the same also does his departing bear unto them, and the repentance where it is in truth, can never be in vain, yet may it come to late, to prevent temporal judgment, or to regain ever again, a season



of acting for God, when there is a more eminent call thereto, at one time, then another.

3. It is an *unchangeable truth*, which varies not, with the changes of time, that there is no condition on the earth can be safe whither as to a Nation, or Person, were it never at such advantage, in external things; wherein they cannot say, *God is with us herein*, and we are designing for him; as on the other hand, it must be founded wholly on *Atheism*, where the state; and danger of a Nation is not judged from; the sins thereof, and the measure of the same, more then from any visible hazard; for tho particular places, and people, under a Profession of Christ, comes not to the same height in filling up the measure of sin; yet it must surely have it's fatal period, when deferred Judgment will not stay on day longer.

4. What ever uncertainty be in humane things, yet is this *unchangeable*, and sure, that such who inherit the same sins of others, against whom God hath appeared in any eminency of Providence shall inherit the same Judgements; which hath not only been measured out to such as hath gone before, but are pledges to after times of what may be expected. For as the way of grace, changeth not, and the redeem'd of the Lord, as dear to him now, as ever; so is he immutably just, and his ways keeps the same measure with his revealed truth, so as a *Solid Interpretation of Scripture* needs

needs no extraordinary *Prophetik Spirit*, to infer *Judgment*, from *sin*, where there is no serious returning unto him, and *when the Lord God hath spoken, who can but Prophecy Amos 3:8.*

5. It is of unquestionable evidence also, that *national sins*, wherein the *body of a Nation*, and *People is unite*, and hath a joint acceſſion herein; when it is thus the *publick Sin of a Community*, must meet with a *Stroke*, and *Judgment* within time of as *publick extent*, and cannot be laid over in *this respect to the Judgment of the great day*, when once it's *measure is filled up here*; since else the *Glory of God in his truth*, and *remunerative Justice*, should not have on such an account, a *Vindication* before the *World*, in the *sight of Angels, and Men*, if his *spotleſſ Judgment* should not thus bear some *proportion*, to the *nature of that guilt*; the *God of truth* hath given his *Word*, and *Dominion*, and *Authority* over *Nations* both to *pluke up*, and to *plant*, as well as over *persons*, which can never be made void.

6. There can be no doubtfulness here also that it is simply impossible for a *church to subsist*, or *preserve it's station* in a *Church state* by a *naked external form* only; or in the *purity of religion*, without some *life*, and *power*, of the same; since if there were no *reall inbringing*, or *building up of the elect* there, then the *Gospel* had no more *work in the same*, and no *interest* were there for the *Spirit of God* to keep fellowship with; so that

the *intrinsic strength* of any *particular church*, yet of the *politick bodie* therein; lyes not in the *number*, or *bulk*, but in the *weight*, nor is't the *extensive growth* of a church to a visible profession that makes, a *reall increase*; but how great an *interest* does a *few* such, whose way is the *life*, and *power* of that *doctrine* they profess, make in the *place* they are in; tho this seems litle apprehended, what *influence* the *hid part* in a nation of *humble, serious christians* hath on the *external State* thereof, and on the *administration* of *providence* in the world, who makes *least appearance* in it, by a near *entercourse* with *heaven*, and by such *high value*, and regard which they have there; so as the *Lord* hath even *subdued* the greatest *wicissitude* and *changes* of the *time* to the *intercession*, and *prayers* of such.

Let me but *add* this herewith, that tho the *Lord* does ever *distinguish* betwixt the *Godly*, and the residue of men in times of *publick calamity*, and *Judgments*, so as not to lay them *common* herein with the *wicked*, yet on the other hand, it is not a *numerous Party*, even of most *choise*, and *Reall Christians* in a *Land*, will stand in the way of *wrath*, and of some *dismal stroke*, when the *sett time* of *Judgment* is once come; but may be then such with a *Nation*, when there is no more hearing, or *intercession*, but for that *instance* of the *Lords* sifting his judgment, if there had been but *30 Persons* in the *Cities of the Plain*: it

was an eminent return to *Abraham*, and extraordinary act of condescendence, that makes no rule. There was a choise and numerous remnant in *Judea*, who sought the Lord then, when that dismal night of the *Captivity* came on; and it is of late, that such a *tremendous instance*, we have before us in the *Case of Bohemia*, where so conspicuous a part then was of a *People zealous for God*, when such a *publick overwhelming stroke* came on.

But now in the *Second Place* I must speak a few words to what seems in some singular way, to speak to *Britain*, and *Ireland* by very sad, and monitory signs, beyond any of the Churches about: it is, I know, easie, and usual to challenge the *darkness of Providence*, more then to regard, what is clearly revealed to us, as the *intent & voice* thereof; and these are indeed sad, and dismal like *dispensations*, that tho they be not *silent*, but have a *distinct*, and *audible voice*, yet *Seals no Instruction* herewith, on the spirits of men. I confels a *natural Respect*, and *tye*, to such a *Part of the earth*, beyond any else; renders this to some, to be more *heavie*, and *dreadful* that if *Sovereign grace*, do not wonderfully interpose, it cannot be found in the *course of divine Providence*, since the beginning of time; that ever the *measure of sin*, *contempt of a Deity*, and *oppositions to the Holy God in the designs* both of his *Word*, and *Providence* hath come to such a hight as is visible

gible in these Churches this day; but that some extraordinary appearance of Wrath, and Judgment from the Lord hath as visibly followed thereon, to be a publick monument, for after times, wherein these Remarks, are so unavoidable.

1. To what a strange, and fatal issue, hath that purest profession of Christ, in the Protestant Religion, which hath been long enjoyed there, now come, when such publik contempt, and scorn, is thrown upon the same, in the truth, and power thereof; as a matter of their greatest abhorrence; when the most numerous part of the multitude, every where may be seen in a stated opposition to the dominion, and authority of God in his laws, yea such horrid tenets, as well as practices, even in the common sense of mankind, may be discernable there, as in pagan nations, under some awe, and restraint of a natural conscience would be affrigting; since every nation will walk in the name of their God; but these are such as have at once divested themselves of all hope and cast off all fear, or dread, of a wrath that is to come.

2. And as to one special evidence hereof, what cause may it be to meditate terror, as to the present state of these nations, when a spirit of blasphemie is let forth there and gott such a prevalence amongst all ranks, as it's accounted a matter of fashion, and breeding, to go a length beyond other, in tearing that blessed name of God, in  
whose

whose hand is their breath, by profane, and blasphemous oaths. This is a thing by it self, that's purely diabolick, and hath nothing humane in it, can have no affinity with the flesh, nor is as an ordinary degree, of a real possession by the Devil, and much sadder, then that which hath been on many by constraint, and putting a force upon their tongue to blaspheme, which otherwise would have been a horror, and dread, since this is by consent, and a delight, that could have no possible rise, but from pure enmity to the Holy God, yet is it now come to such a prodigious height, as if Britain did design a proper monopoly this way, and Preheminence, of the same, above all nations of the earth; tho none more will pretend a national love, and respect, to it's standing, and interest, to whom that saying of one of the ancients, may be applicable, if such would once give it a hearing; *si tibi non vis parcere, attamen parco Patriæ tuæ*; doe we thus provoke the Lord to jealousy, are we stronger then he; but when such a contagion seemes to be past the restraint of humane Laws who declares their sin as sodome, will not the great lawgiver, at last take it under his hand, to vindicate his authoritie.

3. But what a symptome, is this herewith of approaching judgments when to such a hight, and so universalie, the corruption of the youth, is in this day, and these parts, in so an usual a way; and among such, a Spirit of Atheism, and profanity,

nity, is in that manner got up, as may be sadly foreseen, what a *dismal night* must follow hereon, and cause these know, whose respects seem to run so high for a *national interest*, that what does thus *strike*, at the root, truth & Godliness, amongst men, in so strange a *debauchery*, of the *generation that's coming up*, (gives the same stroke, to the greatest *security of government*, and to what founds the greatest obligations, to *civil, or moral duties*; yea hath a native, and unavoidable tendency to ruine the *politick bodie*, to *emasculate the spirits of men*, and *obstruct the vigorous improvements, of their natural parts*, and will in a short time depress, and change the *very genius* of these once *renowned nations*, if there be no *due application*, of the *proper, and adequate remedie* for the same.

4. And do we not with too great evidence now see, how much that *old Protestant spirit*, which was in the *power, and life of that profession*, is gone, and extinguished this day; before which the *Romish interest* could not, possibly stand, when *humane power and might* did little concur therewith; so as it may be a strange but too visible a *remark*, how that *distinction*, hath got such place in *Britain*, beyond any other *reformed churches* else, which is betwixt the *Protestant interest*, and *politick concerns* thereof, and the *Protestant Religion*, which lyes in the *pure doctrine of Christ*, in its *truth, and efficacy on mens soul*, and



and *practice* ; when thus may be seen , what a throng and easie concurrence is there to *promote the one* , and bear the highest respects thereto , so far as they find a *private interest* , and *external motives* renders this necessary , who does *hate* , and to the utmost *oppose themselves to the other* ; yea fears nothing more , then to have this get any *authority over their conscience* ; and oh thence it is that when *privilege* and *propertie* upon a temporal interest , are as the *apple of mens eye* , when these are once touched , yet are the highest *indignities* , and *affronts to the honor of God* , and to his *truth* of a small regard.

5. But if we yet look further , in to the *Publick State of Religion* in these *Churches* , there may be a more astonishing *sight* , and of *greater abominations* still , answerable to that *vision* *Ezekiel 8* ; when within the *precincts* of a *Christian Church* , once so purely *reformed* , such a *party* is got up and growing , whose work is not onlie to take men off the serious work , and power of *Christianity* ; but to subvert wholly the *foundation* of our *faith* , under that late designation of *Deists* , and that men are now become so wearied of the *Christian Profession* , as were their power answerable to their will , they would bring in a new model of *paganism* , and fix themselves at last there. And oh is it come to such a day , after so bright a sunshine of the *Gospel* hath gone before , and after so great an *effusion of the Spirit of God* , that such a party

a party should be upon the encrease in so horrid an appearance, were it possible, to make void the whole *frame of the Gospel*, to juttle our ever blessed Redeemer, who once was the *desire of the nations*, off his throne, to thrust the *crown off his head*, the *scepter of whose government is righteousness, & peace*; and give, if they could, a mortall stroke to him, who is the *life, and light of men*, and by *whose stripes we are healed*, yea as if they could make their party good against that rod of iron, with which he bears rule over his adversaries. But what can these design to themselves to render *humane being* desirable here on the *earth*, except to have a share of the same priveledge, with the *beasts, of the field*, that within a little they should have no more *being*, and oh *what a God* does such deprive themselves of who only *propitious*, to poor man in *Christ*, and otherwise not the object of our *trust*, but of terror; yet is this way now come to that length, as it would seem to despise all *moral releef*.

6. I must yet *add* here, tho it be a very sad ungrateful *Subject*, how we are *fallen* in a *day*, when the greatest discoveries of *God*, both in the way of *Judgment*, and *mercy* seems to have no affecting sense, or regard on this generation, and the great designs both of *grace*, and *providence* amidst such marvelous changes hath gone before, in that manner withstood as most seems to unite there strength herein; even when this may be in a  
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singular way applicable to *our time*, what the Lord did once speak to *Israel* by *Moses*; *your eyes have seen the great Acts of the Lord*, and these great temptations, the Signs, and Wonders, which he hath done in this *last age*; yet if Sovereign grace do not marvelously appear, it may be fear'd, that both the *voice of God* in his *Word and Works* hath discharg'd their commission, without any due regard to the same; and that judgment, and mercy after such extraordinary methods of divine patience have done their part, and is now come to such a *judicial withdrawing*, and departure of that great *Ambassador*, the *Spirit of God* from his *Church*; that there seems but small access to serious *Publick Humiliation*, and *fasting*, or to call for *solemn Assemblies* for this end, except to *Personate*, & *Act* such a part as that of the *mourning Women amongst the Jews at Funerals*, and amongst these of the most *serious Spirit* in this day, such a restraint may be found of that *Seriousness* and fervor herein which once did appear, as renders it a more *ominous Presage* that there may be nothing to follow but that last sentence, *let them alone*; and must not all thus reason and judge, that as the interest of *Sacred Truth*, and the *Honor*, and *Glory of God* in mens subjecting thereto is of much higher value then any *temporal Interest*; so is the *Vindication* of the same before the *World* of a greater concern then the *stability or standing of Kingdoms*, yea to fear more deeply

deeply that such a *time*, how long so ever deferred, must at last take place, when his spotless procedure of *Judgement*, shall be then cleared fully; *shall I not visit for these things, shall not my soul be avenged on such a People.*

But now in the *third Place*, there is one *Inquiry* that should ly near, and hath a more then ordinary call for the same in such a day; to know *what is yet left*, and accessible in the *matter of duty*, that might be as a *door of hope* for the *Lords Returning* once more, and his respiting of *imminent Judgement*, when so great a Ruine is like to fall under the *Hand of this Generation*. I know any such thing will be to most as matter of derision, whose *fear*, and *hopes* of this kind goes no higher then *present Objects of Sense*, and it is little I can adventure to speak hereon, but as to any *measure of light* I have attained, I can no more question, that the same voice *from the Lord*, is now going forth to the *Churches of Britain*, and *Ireland*; then that I read what is spoke to *Juda* *Ezekiel 22: 30.* *And I sought for a man amongst you that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gate before me for the Land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none; therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my Wrath, their own wayes have I recompens'd on their Heads, says the Lord God.* It's sure then *wrath* was near to a breaking forth, when this *last call* came yet with an offer of *Peace*,

nor is it questionable there was a serious part then who were deeply affected with such a time, tho it was not easy to find one of a *truly raised spirit*, to do and endure something more then ordinar for God, when so great a *ruine* was ready to fall under their hand; but to clear the *import of such a call*, with respect to the publick State of the *Churches of Britain*, under this *allusion*, here made use off, to stand in a *gape and breach*, when the *Church as a defended City* is laid open to an extream and imminent hazard; I must speak a few things to be considered, what must follow if no *Intercessor* be found, to answer the voice of this *call*, by a suitable appearance herein.

1. Tho it may be now reckoned, that the sky is more clear as to the *State of Britain*, then for many Years past, when the *breach* seems to be made sure against either *Forrain or intestine Assaults*, and that in the way of reason and the ordinar course of humane affairs, things are come to a more secure and settled State, yet is there another *aspect* of things, that should deeply affect our spirits, when the *publick hazard* of the time is greater then from all *humane power*, and the party to be most feared, is assuredly *divine Wrath*, after a long interval of forbearance, that is ready to break forth in some extraordinary *Acts of Judgment*, for where a day of *attonement* goes not before, can no true deliverance be expected, to *quiet and settle these Nations*; yet how rare are

they who take this to heart, or tremble within themselves on the thoughts of *Judgment* to be near, if it does not appear from *natural* or *visible* causes, tho nothing be more discernable from *Moral Signs*.

2. Whatever present calm be from these terrors and fears, that have been of late, yet may it be judged whether it be a serious business, or not to stand in such a breach as is this day, when the greatest interest of our *Faith*, is laid open to such numerous assaults; as there seems no less cause to stand, and contend for the *Christian Cause* and *Interest* now in these *Nations*, against such who are under a visible Profession of the same, then once was against the *Heathens*; whilst that primitive Spirit, which was then a Spirit of Power and of *Glory*, does too rarely appear, or these measures of grace in such impressions as was then they are under a sad and judicial restraint; most being taken up so entirely with private resentments of personal Injuries, and bitter intestine conflicts, as the sound of such a hazard cannot be heard, until it be felt. It was the Power and Evidence of Christianity on mens souls, that did first make *Protestants*, and made way for the planting & settlement of the *Reformed Churches*; but it would seem now reckoned that the *Protestant Interest* can stand, tho the *Christian Faith* were extinct in the power and virals thereof, and might easily be given up by the greatest part of

this *Generation*, if it's *outworks* could be preserved, where a *temporal Interest* renders that necessary; whilst that *magnetick power and Vertue*, which the *Truth* once had on the World is not to be seen, or any deep sence of that Interest which Religion once had in the *Glory of a passive Testimony* for the same.

3. Is not the *gape and breach*, we have to stand in this day, of such a kind, that where the ancient *Love of these renowned Churches*, the *Love of their Youth*, and *Kindness of their Espousals unto God*, did so brightly shine forth after the *Reformation from Popery*, it is now resolved unto so dismal a change, as with most what ever is most lovely, excellent, and desirable in the *Revelation of the Gospel*, and should have the most attractive influence on mens soull, is visibly despised and vilified; yea which renders this *breach and gape* more dreadful, that after all the *cost & expence* which the Lord hath wared in planting, and letting forth a *Vineyard to Britain*, sending moe *Servants* then at the first with the indearing *persuatives of the Gospel*, and on the other hand with solemn and expresse warnings of the hazard of such *Strokes of Judgment*, to come, as hath been afterwards felt; yet hath the return been in a continued and growing enmity against the truth, and instead of rendring the fruits of this *Vineyard* in its season, hath rather conspired to deride and despitefully use such as have come to



demand the same, and what can be judged will be the result hereof, if men have not concluded that God hath forsaken the earth; can it be thought that the *Breaches of these Nations* shall be bound up, but that they must widen further, if there be not in some singular manner a standing up in this *breach*, to turn away his wrath; which is a service that comes now under our hand, as may not linger or stay, when warnings of so extraordinary kind are reinforced; for this is a *call*, hath a *limited time and season* allotted thereto, that may have a *shorter period* then we apprehend when a door of *Intercession* hath been in such unusual manner kept open, and *Grace* hath so long interposed, before *Judgment* should come to a final execution.

4. I must add hereto what sence ought to be of the hazard of such a *breach*, when a sight of all *Immorality and Ungodliness* is turned so open and visible, as it *Sathan* did essay to have an open *Throne* again set up, as once he had amongst the *Nations*; whilst the spirit of few are sealed with any suitable impression of the same, lest this be the voice of the Lord without recalling, *shall I not visit these things, shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation Jer. 5: 9.* and what a time is it, when the *Reverence and Authority of Religion* is so far gone off mens spirits, that it such can bring up a private interest, and have some treasure of that kind laid up, they are under no fear of *treasuring*

suring up Wrath and Judgment; it was a rare example that of *Daniel*, who upon the foreseeing of a stroke which he was not to fear for himself, yet *was astonished for ane hour*, and his thoughts troubled him, by reason of the strangenes of it *Dan 4:19*. That there is a most choise and serious part yet in these *Nations* as is this day in the earth, is unquestionable, but even such who in these *difficult & perillous times* past, have been helpt to stand, and go through a variety of *dark and strange Dispensations*, I suppose have not found a time in a more singular way *trying* in the *matters of Conscience*, then is this day; and that there was never more hazard of an insensible wearing out from under former impressions of *duty* and the *ways of truth*, which once they had, or a more difficult part to have that *ancient fear*, and *tenderneß of light* kept in exercise which as the *apple of the eye*, may be easily hurt, but not so easily helped.

But tho it is clear that this voice and call for *standing in the gape and breach*, does respect all of a serious spirit in the things of God, yet are there some more eminently fitted from the Lord with peculiar Excellencies on their spirit then others, to appear on so high a service; which as it is a talent not bequeathed in vain, where this in a more remarkable way is let forth, so is it of greatest weight to know *time and opportunity* for this end, and when a *season of Providence* may

call to some higher improvement hereof for God, then ever again may occur; yea it may be seen in how strange a manner the choicest instruments in the service of their day, are made to differ not only from others, but from themselves, as they are helped to answer such a *call*, and to know the Counsel of God herein. But that I may touch this more particularly, it is requisite to know who may be at the greatest advantage, and in a nearer capacity then others for such a service, about which I judge these things will not be questionable. 1. That such as have a more *near and intimate converse with God* in this day, hath a great room also in this service, to stand in such a *Gape*, yea to save a *Kingdom or Nation*, when Judgment is ready to break forth; these have their Soull kept in that manner under the power and attractions of the things of God, beyond the residue of men, as not to be affrighted or taken off from appearing for him by the force and prevalence of *example*; it is these who are at most advantage to discern the *Judicial Removes of the presence of God from the Church*, and the Generation they live amongst, and the imminent hazard of Wrath, and approaching Judgment; yet it's these who from *internal Motives* can find it easy to lay their dearest things at the stake, in behalf of the Truth and Glory of Christ in the Land they belong to, and without respect to private interest lay themselves in the way of a publick hazard

and with the Spirit of blessed Bernard, as he speaks; *Quid in nobis murmur bonum sit quam in Deum, bonum est si Deus ne digne ut uti pro cly-*  
 100. 2. They are in a special way fitted to answer this call and service, who have the Sense of any singular engagements they are under to God, much on their heart, and what hereby they owe in a peculiar way to do for him, and for a more special service to the age they live in, to seek the interest and welfare of their People, to whom they have the nearest natural tie; which is that service for the Generation, and publick trust should ly near these who have had more then ordinarie receipts of mercy from the Lord, & of these specially it might be expected that they dare stand up for God, and the Interest of his Truth, tho they should stand alone herein, which surely in the issue will be found a safer standing then with the multitude, or such whole design for the publick interest goes no further, then their private concerns does influence. It is sure the Words of *Mordechai Esth. 4: 13* Are still directed to this day, think not w<sup>th</sup> thy self thou shalt escape, for if thou altogether holds thy peace at this time enlargements and deliverances shall arise from another place, but thou and thy Fathers House shall be destroyed. 13  
 But it is undoubted that this Service does in some peculiar way ly to the door of Princes and Rulers, according to their Station, who are of more publick relations then others; their Authority came

in with the *second Covenant*, which by the fall of man was rendred necessary, and have their Power derived from him, by whom *Kings Rule and Princes Decree Judgment Proverbs 8. 15.* so as the advance of the *Gospel of Christ*, and Preservation of *Sacred Truth*, both in its purity and power, is made the object of their highest trust, yea what a singular blessing this is to a time, when such does eminently interpose upon any imminent hazard to the Church, and thus bears evidence that they have an *Unction from God on their heart* as well as their Office, And it came to pass *2 Chron. 34. 19.* that when the King heard the Words of the Law, that he rent his Cloathes, and commanded *Hilkiah the Son of Shaphan* &c. go, and enquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in *Israel* and in *Juda*, concerning the Words of the Book that's found, for great is the Wrath of the Lord that's poured upon us, because our Fathers kept not the Word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this Book. This hath looked as a door of hope to *Britain* in the present day, when such of a serious & excellent Spirit have come to the Throne, if the sin of this Generation, as may be feared, be not come to that height, of a resolute opposition to any restoring means, but if the Authority of God should be thus taken off the conscience of men by so publik abounding *Atheism* and *Impiety*, it shall be found that the Honor and Authority of *Magistrates* will fall here-

herewith before men. 4. They have a peculiar  
 access also to such a service for God, and the in-  
 terest of the place they live in, who have more  
 advantage then others by the Repute and Autho-  
 rity of their *Example*, to walk in a *counterma-*  
*tion to any publick and contagious evil of the time,*  
 as are most prevalent, and thus to affright the bold  
 and daring countenance thereof; this should be a  
 honourable appearance to oppose the *Kingdom of*  
*Sathan*, wherein it's getting most remarkable  
 strength and credit by the Customariness there-  
 of. 5. But in a special way these who would aim  
 at so high and blessed a *Mark* as this, must know  
 some higher acquaintance with that *Mystery of*  
*Faith*, then what seems to be understood by most  
 in this day; and of a reliance on God by a *parti-*  
*cular trust*, yea the truth of such special assistan-  
 ces of the *spirit*, as can raise the soull to a higher  
 resoluteness in the matter of duty by *opposition*,  
 so as it can be born up amidst the strongest diffi-  
 culties, from no humane interest, or the greatness  
 of a party in the earth, but from the greatness  
 of their *God*: It is true the way of beleiving is an  
*immutable Ordinance*, which God hath settled  
 for the support and services of his People within  
 time, and should be the *leading principle* of a  
 Christians Life, to go through all conditions  
 and changes in adventuring on that God, who is  
 of infinite Power both to hurt and help, but it is  
 one of the great experiments also of Religion, *to*

what a pitch and degree the Faith of some of the Saints hath been raised upon some extraordinary Service for the Lord; where no natural causes could influence the same; and above what they could in an ordinarie way reach. 6. Yet is not the door for such a Service shut on any who have an interest in the Truth once delivered to the Saints, but may still have some share and room in so great an *Undertaking for God*; and the Interest of his Truth; and should each of a serious Spirit, design something *personally* for answering this call, to sustain a part in so choise a service for the truth, suitable to their Station and Talent; it should bring a marvelous change therewith on the times, and cause another face appear in the publick face of the Church; nor is it expressible what the improvement of a *little strength*, when it hath been designed for the Lord, & under his call hath oft attained, which in no ordinarie way, or from any visible appearance could ever have been expected; yea what a marvelous use the soveraign God can make of a few nay of one, where his concurrence goes forth therewith.

But since the publick State of things this day is such as seems, to controul any confidence or hope for answering such a call, to stand in the breach of *foetrying and bawdoin a time*, I would speak a few things in the *third place*, which may put some more then ordinarie weight of this call on our spirits. 1. That as it's easy for the Lord to raise

and



and excite the spirits of men to such *duties*, as in the way of humane reason would seem wholly insuperable; so can it not be found in the *Records of times past*, that where grace did interpose in any singular way to prevent *Judgment*, and for recovering of a Church in some extreme case, but there hath also been something more extraordinary than at other times, in the acting forth and excitement of some *instruments*, to appear for God with a more Heroick motion on their spirits, then what hath been usual, and when he hath had a *saving work* and design to accomplish, then *Saviours have come upon Mount Zion* *Obad. v. 24*.

2. If it be a serious business to discern the times, we are in with respect to the *publick State of these Nations*, the voice of this call might then be near our spirits, since if we turn our eyes back, it is demonstrably evident that the Lord hath not dealt so with any *Nation of the Gentiles* under the *New Testament*, as with the *Isle of Britain*, both as to eminent experiments of Providence, and the dispensation of Grace and measures of light, especially since its recovery from the Power of Antichristian Darkness; so as it is not strange that he hath gone forth in a more singular way of Procedure therewith then other Churches, and that nothing is new under the Sun as *Solomon* speaks, yet there may be seen some thing peculiar and astonishing as to the way and *Order* of Providence there in this age, as will not be easy for the most judi-

judicious *Observers*, to find a precedent for the same; and if we now consider the *present time*, as things are stated after such resolute oppositions to the voice of these *times past*, and when no vicissitudes of Providence hath yet put any stop to a growing hight of *Apostacy*, as may bee too visible there; yea that it's sure, God will not lose his Work or Intent in the great expence he hath been at for *reclaiming this Generation*, it may be then without a *Prophetick Light* seen that something very extraordinary is near, either in the way of *Judgment* or *Mercy*; so as this service and appearance in the present *Breach* seems to be in another manner call'd for beyond that of an ordinarie day, when there is yet room, and the door of intercession not absolutely shut; but if this seem light, it will be found that the longest measure of *divine Patience* will come to a *Year and a Day at last*.

3. It is sure and unquestionable also, that the answering of this call, is the alone way to have God interested in the publick State and Concerns of Britain in the present day, before whom all Nations are as nothing, and the greatest Train of Inferiour Causes, when their furthest strength and activity is put forth, of no weight, when he withdrawes his influence as *Job 7: 8. thy eyes are upon me, and I am not*. It may be matter of serious remark, that in this late time something more then ordinarie hath appeared in the *French standing and strength*, and tho on principles of reason the

the Power of such an Adversary should not be such matter of fear ; when an unusual concurrence of means is to stem such a tide, and under the conduct of so *Wise and Heroick a Leader*; yet on the other hand, *Ashur the rod of my anger* *Isay 10: 5. is a formidable Party*; and it is a threatening case when the security and interest of a *Nation* stands more by a *permissive Providence*, and singular long suffering of God, then by *promise*. The discovery of *hid Plots and Contrivances against the Government* hath been of late in a special manner remarkable, but oh! there is one Plot, which is of another nature, to be above all fear'd, that's caried on not in the *dark*, but in the *publick light*, to betray these *Nations* to the Common Adversary, it is such a Plot, *as was betwixt Balak and Balaam, to divide Israël from God*, that their strength might depart from them, when once there is a sad departure from him; and it's sure these, whoever are interest'd herein, hath the most active concurrence to weaken, and bring low the *Politick Body of Britain*, to hasten on a dismal night, and advance the interest and strength of visible Adversaries: But if there be no suitable appearance in this day, to *counteract so dismal a Plot*, and the growing strength of such a *Conspiracy* herein, there may be then too just cause for these of the most serious spirit, to long to have their *part acted*, and be *gone off the stage* ere they see the dreadful Effects hereof:

hereof: and what ever advantage be of *external means*, it might be too easy then to judge of future things, where an inordinate respect to men, and a low regard to keep in with God, is one of the publick signs of the time we are in. I know it's no easy thing to improve the *Providences of times past*, that are at any distance from us, or to bring them home by a just *application* to the *present day*, and to compare what we now see of the Way and Workings of God, with what hath already past in these *late Years*, but if this were more improved and understood, there might be another view and discerning of the *times we are in*, and *what of the night* now it is: we have seen in some singular way, the rising and falling of humane interests so contrare to humane reason and expectations, as might tend fully to clear from what hand they came, and to what Issue they were directed; we have seen such *Revolutions*, which the *Churches of Britain* hath gone thorough, and hath past over the same, as seem yet little understood, and it must be a perverse and false Judgment, if it be supposed that we have no more to do herewith, but a naked remembrance of such things in the matter of Fact, and what was mens way and part therein. But that I may come more near on this *Subject*, there are some things that need to be further understood thereon.

1. That it's sure when such a *Gap* this day is lying

lying open betwixt us and *divine Wrath*, there can be no standing herein without a serious *interceding Work with God* by immediate addresses, when its unexpressible what a mighty efficacy this hath on the World, and the great changes thereof, and how far he hath subjected the *Interest of Nations to the Prayers of the Saints*. It is a hopeful sign when *Rulers and Magistrates* do call and excite a Nation to publick fasting and prayer, but in the ordinarie way it's followed this day, upon to extraordinary an application to the Majesty of God, it may be just matter of fear, if such essentiall requisites be not concurrent therewith. 1. That the same *Authority and Power* be interposed for a serious and impartial Inquiry as to *National Sins*, which are most prevalent in the time, where the current of the multitude runs, and hath the loudest cry to *Heaven*; since otherwise a solemn address of this kind might bear a sad evidence of *Atheism and Impiety*, to suit *National Deliverances and Protection*, and that the Holy God would be *with us*, and propitious to us for the publick State of the Nation; whilst we are not *with him*, yea that he would not forsake us, whilst our forsaking him is so visible, which is in effect to plead that the most *settled & unalterable establishments of his wrath* be made void, and rescinded for our sake; yea can another return be expected in such a case then what is *Exod. 19. 4.* 2. That something then upon so extraordinary an address

to

to Heaven, might be designed by *publick Authority in a promissary way* to be made practicable, as sould tend to a more visible resolute withstanding the growing strength of such *National evils*, and may thus bear a publick testimony and appearance against them from such who stand under so high a trust unto God for this end.

2. Where this great *service* is taken to heart for *standing in the gape this day* before God, there needs also some clear discerning of the *end and design of Providence*, in these *astonishing successive changes*, which hath of late gone over this *Generation*: it's true there may be many *ends* at once reached in any signal piece of the Work of God about his Church, yet is there sureiy still some *higher & great end* which he hath therein, that should be most deeply enquired into, and tho I can attain little this way in respect of others, yet may with humble confidence say, that under a serious pressure of spirit I have sought to understand the same, and how to trace the *Lines of Providence* in the strange *Revolutions of this age*, to the *Center of that great Design of the Lord therein*, to which all these *oppositions*, which hath been made to the same hath so remarkably brought on their own fall and breaking in that way, but this I must further insist on, tho there needs specially a turning our eyes first back to *times past*, for discerning the *Work of God in our day*, and to see in what a

*circuit*

circuit divine Judgment did go from on part of the *Reformed Churches* to another, with the very first date and entry upon this remarkable age; and when that *Sword which was bathed in Heaven*, and had it's commission to *Germany*, and *Bohem* in that fore, and long intestine War there, had once done it's work; then did it in a successive course enter on the *Churches of Britain*, and *Ireland*, and a<sup>up</sup> of trembling from the Lord put into there hand; and then did begin that great *Scene of Providence* which hath been since acted there, wherein, as in all the most remarkable *Steps*, and *Periods* hereof, hath the voice of the Lord, been expressly pointing at this great end, and design in the same, for bringing his counsel more clearly to light, if we had eyes to perceive, and hearts to understand what is his work, and declared intent herein; which is that the *Kingdoms of this World may become the Kingdoms of our Lord*, and of his Christ, who shall reign for ever and ever *Revelat. 11: 15*; and that his Interest in these Nations, as a part of that inheritance which was in a peculiar way given him of the Father *Psalms 2: 8*. be more fully asserted in the *Glory of his Regal Power*, against all such who would withstand the same; for which end may it be clearly understood what such an appearance did mean, in so strange an administration of Providence by the *Sword* to these Nations in this age; what such unusual shakings and overturnings



there, yea by such restless *oppositions* to any civil settlements, since the Lord begun to shake Britain; to make known this solemn period of time was come, and the days of the 7th Trumpet, when our Lord Jesus should take to himself his great Power, and Reign, which had been so long darkened by the usurpations, and enmity of men there-to; yea that he was surely gone forth, who hath that name written on his vesture, and thigh, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, to make good the same; and will have this name engraven, on all the ways, and *actings* of Providence, who must reign until he hath putt all his Enemies under his feet 1 Corin<sup>th</sup>. 15: 25. and the Nation, and Kingdom, that will not serve him, shall perish, and these Nations shall utterly be layed waste Isay. 60: 11. for thus hath the Lord spoken, and is settled, & sealed by the decree of him that chaingeth not. It is true he hath been walking in the dark as to most in these times past; and even from his choicest people there hath been oft a *hiding* of his work, and keeping it out of their sight, amidst these strange changes, as hath put the most discerning to a stand; it might be easie to see mens intentions in their *actings*, and under what influences they have been moved; yea what bitter risings of heart, and quarrellings hath been upon the miscarrying of their ends; but this is an other sight, and of a higher concern, to see and discern wisely the Work of the Lord, and how amidst all the sea-

ling

lings of these strange times, his way, and course of providence hath been ever steady, and fixt.

3 It may be thus clearly seen, if our spirits were more deeply lett forth on such a study, that the strength of our day, yea the standing and security of the publick state of these Nations, does assuredly ly in a resolute concurrence, with this great design of the Lord; so as otherwise there can be no standing in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath. But since this Subject, of the Catholick Right, and Kingdom of Jesus Christ, over the Kingdoms of this Earth, is so strange a mystery to many in these times, and such different thoughts and conceptions are hereof; as I have desired to know the way of truth, on these sure principles, and grounds; that I might have full rest and settlement to my own spirit herein; so I may say, that in the clearness of this light, I have found a special strengthening in the Christian Faith, when with the furthest evidence it may be seen:

1. How that which is spoken of the *donative, and universal Kingdom of our Lord Jesus*, which was given him of the Father, as incarnate, and after his *Ascension*, is not to be understood of that which is his *essential, and natural Kingdom*, which did belong to his person, as he is the brightness of the Fathers Glory, and God equal with him; but is such as was promised, and by special donation given to him, that the ends and uttermost Coasts of the Earth, should be his inheritance Ps. 2: 8.

and his Dominion to be from Sea, to Sea, and from the River, to the ends of the earth Psalm 72: 8. yea is the same which was given to him Dan. 7: v, 14. when he was invested, with Dominion, Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him, &c.

2. As there can be no suspence, or darknes in this, so is it no less clear, his entring on the administration of his *Mediatory Kingdom*, was reserved only to the times of the *N. Testament*, to which the *fall* of the 4 *greatest Monarchies*, which ever was in the earth, was direct, and subordinate, to make way for the same: and loe, here may we see the *first period* of the *visible Glory* of *Christs Reign*, and his entrance on the same, when after such strong oppositions, the *Pagan World*, was at last, made to bow down, and fall before his truth, and submit to him.

3. But herein it cannot be understood by this special bequeathment of the *Kingdoms of the World*, to be the *Lords*; in that sense only, of inbringing the *Elect* out of the same, or of his *internal Reign*, on the hearts of men, but that it lyes, in a *visible surrender*, and *subjecting of the collective body of Nations*, to the *Scepter of his Government*, when the *Princes and Kings* of the earth should subject their *Regal Authority* to his *Rule and Empire*; as holding their *Dominion* from him, to whom all power, and judgment is committed, and can bear that stile only of being the *Catholick King*,  
and

and *Lord of all*: for this is a truth that shines with so clear a light from the whole *Scripture*, as it may be strange how possibly it should be questioned, & nothing can be more comforting to *Christian Magistrates*, then to have so highly desirable a *holding of their power*, as they may have the *Son of God*. thus interested in their *security*, and interest as a part of that *inheritance*, which belongs to his *Mediatory Kingdom*. Nor does it evacuate the *Magistracy of Heathens* for the interest of humane society, tho they have none in the *Church*; as it can never make void also his *Catholick Right*, and *Dominion* over them, by *whom Kings reign*, *Prov. 8: 15.* although it restrains the exercise thereof.

4. But there is yet a further, & growing light on this great subject which now meet us, & to be clearly seen, how the more eminent appearance of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, in the *Glory*, and *State of his Mediatory Kingdom* in the *Earth* was alone reserved to the *dayes of the seventh and last Trumpet*; for which as nothing can be more evident, then the contemplating of the same, with that period of time, in which was the first rise, and restoring of the *Church*, from *Antichristian darkness*, when the *Lord* did himself go forth in the glory of his power, to plant and settle the *Reformed Churches*; and thus to make way for his *Kingdom*, did with the first blast of that *Trumpet* sound a *renewal*, to his people out of *Babylon*: so I have here-

in, been made to admire with joy, the exactness of that correspondence betwixt the *events of this Trumpet*, that hath already taken place, with what is so punctually foretold hereof *Rev. 11: 15.* for as it is surely there promised, that then should be *an opening of the Temple of God in Heaven, and the Ark of his Testimony be seen there*, which had been formerly shut up; loe how expressly hath the *God of Truth made good his Word* herein, and kept the *time*, which he had set for the same, in the bright shining forth of his *truth*, and the *way of Salvation*, when for so many *ages* kept hid from the *World*; to which are the whole *Reformed Churches* this day a standing witness. yea have we not seen his appearance also in so unusual manner, in the *greatness of his power*, & with *garments dyed in blood*, to make way for the *visible Glory of his Reign*, as we can see it was there foretold, how the *Nations were angry*, and by their oppositions to him, made way for his wrath in such tremendous effects thereof, as it hath had these days past, to shew the *time was at last come*, to let the *World* know, that the *Lord Jesus Christ* is no *titular King*, he to whom *all power is given in Heaven and Earth*, nor will bear that *Name*, and *Style in vain*, or admit a complemental Profession of the same; but that it is sure his *Dominion, & Kingdom*, hath a settled *interest* and *revenue*, belonging thereto, which none may alienate from him, and the greatest of humane powers must be accountable for his claim thereto.

5. But now as our day, and lot, does thus meet in so *extraordinary a period of time*, which hath been so long expected and prayed for in *ages past*, it may be a time of great thoughts, and expectation of what is yet to come, as to the *visible Reign of the Lord Jesus*, our *blessed Head* in the *Glory and Majesty* of his Kingdom, without his *personal Reign* or *bodily appearance* unto men; which with full assurance of faith we should now wait for, when the *voice of this Trumpet* shall bring with it, such a *resurrection from the dead* of these *dry bones*, of the *Jewish Nation*, with so immediate an appearance of God alone herein, as shall dazzle with astonishment all the Nations about; yea when its sound and *voice* also shall call the whole Church that's on the earth, to that highest *gratulatory song of Moses*, and the *Lamb*, as once was at the *Red Sea*, for the final stroke & judgment on the Kingdom of *Antichrist*; wherein the *visible glory of his Reign*, will then be seen with that evidence, and brightness, as if he were *personally* on the earth: and here is that true *Millennium* which is now in some measure begun, and we are surely called to expect, in a gradual increase to such a hight, that in the *value*, and *splendor of this blessed Reign*, the *light of one day*, shall be as *seven days in one*, and the measure of one age then answer, yea exceed a *thousand Years* before, and is so before him, with whom *one day* is as a *thousand years*;

This seems to many in such a time, as a thing remote from their sense, whose thoughts are bounded with present appearances, whilst our *blessed Head* is now gone unto a far Country, to receive a Kingdom for himself, and is invisible to men in these *preparations*, he is making for this higher glory of his *Reign upon the Earth*; so that he is no *object of humane sight*, nor can we come *bodily* to him, to receive his verbal commands from his mouth, as from an *earthly Monarch*, and for these *inward*, and *great demonstrations of his Reign*, they ly deep, and hid, betwixt him, and the souls of his People; but if our comfort, and hope stand by the *Christian Faith* this day, and on that assurance dare venture our *soul* upon an *External State*; we should then with as full certainty of mind as of any visible things, give *faith* to this, that the *Son of God* will not lose the *Work* he hath begun, and so eminently appeared in; that the *interest of his Kingdom*, on the earth is the alone highest *object of the divine care*, and *providence*; and though his *Kingdom is not of the World*, but is purely *spiritual*, yet does the *World* stand thereby, so as it may be justly said, *sine praeiibus & pietate non staret mundus*; nor is it questionable, but that his *Work* will be answerable this day, to his *revealed will & intent*, or can it be in the dark to us, what he is now doing in the *World*, when he hath made such *publick intimation* hereof by the *voice of the last Trumpet*, as should render this



this the most desirable part, that men can act, to  
 fall in with this great, and rising interest of his  
 Kingdom, in the season, and opportunity hereof; &  
 it will surely be found in this time, that where the  
 downfal of the Kingdom of Antichrist, is made re-  
 markable in a Nation, where the terror of its rise,  
 and growth, had so lately gone before; and the  
 Kingdom of Christ, is not set up in its room, nor  
 with a higher regard subjected to; that it must  
 then quickly ripen, and make way, for some great  
 outbreking of wrath and judgment in such a place;  
 for the time is come, that nations, which have imbra-  
 ced the Profession of Christ, must stand, or fall,  
 according to their concurrence with that interest  
 on which the Lord is now gone forth, whose work  
 carries not for men, nor is dependent on humane  
 Counsels, yea it's sure these great Ministers of pro-  
 vidence the Angels tho not seen to us are eminent-  
 ly join'd in on this service, who are the stated Ser-  
 vants of Christ as Mediator, & Head of the Church,  
 and have accordingly their delegate charge, and  
 commission to particular Churches, and Kingdoms;  
 as that great design of Providence for the advance-  
 of his Kingdom in the World does require; and if  
 the giving forth of the Law was so glorious upon  
 that solemn entry, which the Churches Head then  
 made on his Regal Office over Israël, by so extra-  
 ordinar a ministration of the Angels, what a hi-  
 gher Glory must be on his entring on the greatest  
 discovery and administration of his visible Reign

within time; blessed are they amongst men who may have an interest in this service, tho' with most it comes not under their thoughts, and apprehension; but as it was said of *Dux de Alva*, upon an *Eclipse of the Sun* which was then, when he was in a hot pursuit of the Wars, that he *had so much to do upon the earth, as gave him no leisure to look up to Heaven*; so is the great noise, and business of this day, how things may stand sure with us upon the earth. It is become the proverb of these times we are in, *that interest will not lye*, because according to this, men will always appear, and discover themselves; and when ever that word *interest* is made use of; it's judg'd to bear no other sense, then of some temporal concern only, because the *scent*, that most of this *Generation* seemes to be wholly on, is how to seek their own things, but not the things of *Jesus Christ*, which is truly the same, for men to reckon that their soul, is a *forreine* thing to themselves, and that they have no reall interest in the great things of Religion, or a hope beyond time: but it's well, that there is yet such a party this day on the earth, who's way can give that proverb the lie, and are of another spirit, so as to lay their greatest temporal interest down, that they may intently pursue the things of God, and the interest of his truth, and Kingdome amongst men, who with respect to this, would account it a small thing to be the greatest favourites of Princes, if these should once come in competition.

4. But I must now in the *last place*, add some things further on this serious *Subject*; since if it be clear, and undeniable, so as to have our spirits once acquiescing herein, what hath been the *great design of Providence*, with respect to *Britain*, and *Ireland* in all these *great, and astonishing changes*, which have of late been there; it may be then fully understood, what the *present day* does most *call for*, and where the highest improvement of such an extraordinary time does ly, which I hope will not be question'd, to have the *Kingdome of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and his *preëminence herein, more entirely acknowledged*, and *settled in these Nations*; when he is yet once again taking a *new tryall* of them for this end. We find under the *Law* such a thing, which was called the *Lords part*, and *tribute payed unto him* Numb. 31. as a memorial, and oblation, to witness their holding of him alone, all which they did enjoy; we see also a *national claime* layd to a *propriety*, and *part in the Lord*, as their alone greatest interest in the earth, and that they might not be shut out herein *Josua 22: 25.* which would be a rare sight in this day, to see *Nations* contending thus for a *part in the Lord*, and to have their joint right secured this way, as was then betwixt the *two tribes*, and *the half beyond Jordan*, and the *residue of Israël*; we have also things claim'd by the *Son of God*, as his alone propriety, which are called *the things of God* Matt. 22: 1. & are purely

rely *sacred* to him, which are not *mens*, and none may alienate to any private interest, or *end*; yea there is a *bringing presents* to him, which is expressly foretold, and promised under this blessed Reign *Psalms* 72: 10 when thus *Princes*, and *Kings* should serve, and do homage to the *Lord Jesus Christ*, not as *men only*, but as *Kings*, in giving their Power to the furthest to uphold the authority of his *Regal Power*, and *Dominion*; and here I must say whatever be threatning in an unusual manner from the spirit, and temper of this Generation; when nothing would seem more hopefuls, then ane unite, and publick concurrence, to answer this great design of the Lord, and herein to stand in the gape, before him, for turning away of his wrath; or to design a *National Reconciliation*, as well as *Personal*; yet may there be no setting bounds to him therein, who is able to subdue all thing to himself, and who in the way of *his grace*, does oft exceed, what could be possibly hoped for by men, in such a case: since now it after such *signal indications* of Providence, this should be the season and time design'd of the Lord, for a *restoring work* in these Nations, and in other of the *Reformed Churches*; and that he will yet spare a little as to the cutting down of the tree, even when the ax is laid to the roots: it is then sure, that this design shall make way for it's self, and go over such difficulties, as at other times would be insuperable, and make the greatest

Moun.

*Mountains be as a plain; but if this one tide, and opportunity for such a service be now lost in joining in with so eminent a call of Providence for this end, it looks to be the shutting of the door, with such a judicial barr, as should never be again opened, and the last woe be more sore, and dreadful then all which hath gone before. But now I must speak a little more particularly, wherein it is these things doe most specially ly, which in that sense are the things of God, as purely sacred to him, since all things whatsoever are his, and belongs to him, yea wherein that which is the Lords tribute, and part is to be understood now in this day, that should be returned, with a resolute, and cheertful content unto him.*

1. It does in a peculiar respect ly here, to have the same publick, and national regard, to the authority of the Laws, and ordinances of his Kingdome, as a people who are stated in as near a relation to God, as once the Kingdome of Israël, and Juda was: this being a truth of the most undeniable evidence, thonotin things ceremonial, or typical, or such Laws of Government, as had a temporary respect to that dispensation only, yet in a moral sense is it clear, as to what does most essentially relate to a Nation, or Kingdome being the Lords. For it's sure these 3 Nations are this day, under a higher dispensation of grace, have a greater extent of their Priviledges, and stated under more singular engagements, now under the Messia's  
Reign,

Reign; then ever *Israel* was: and it is in this sense, that the *Laws of the Kingdom of Christ* are *Royal Statutes*, and *Laws James 2: 8.* suitable to the state, and dignity of so great a King, and *Lawgiver*, whose authority will not be baffled, and hath a higher power, then that of Angels, or Men, to take account of their observance, wherein is settled an *obligation* on the *souls*, and *conscience* of men, without exception of persons herein; in which our *life as Christians*, and the *standing, and safety of Nations* in a publick state does unavoidably ly; but these are *Laws, & Ordinances* of such a kind, as they can not possible be observ'd, and not loved, nor have any true regard amongst men, without *internal motives* make way thereto: and what a sad account may this be, that *these Kingdomes*, who were once so entirely subjected to *Antichrist* under the darkness of that dismal *Reign*, and did *give their power*, to uphold that interest, with such an unite consent, yea did so resolutely give implicit obedience to his *Decrees*, and *Cannons*; now under the *brightness of the light of the Gospel*, comes not up to any such regard to the *Authority of the Lord Jesus*, and to these *Laws*, which he hath establish'd, tho with the greatest endearments of *love* commended to his Church: there hath been great *stumbleings* at the *Providences of the times past*, and what it should mean that this *last age*, with such a differencing mark should be call'd the

*Iron age*; that thus the Holy God hath in so unusual a manner made use of a *rod of Iron*, in these *Western Parts*, where the *Reformed Religion* is most professed; but it should be no dark riddle, when the oppositions there, to the *Kingdom of his dear Son*, hath been at such a height, that if we could wisely discern the *Work of the Lord*, since the first rise of the civil Wars of Britain, we might clearly see how this was the *Signal given*, that he was then gone forth, and on the way, to take account of *Nations*, as well as *Persons*, that would oppose his interest.

2. It is sure this can not be questioned also, to be one of the great things of God, which is alone sacred to him, what concerns the publick rights, and freedom of the *spiritual Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as a visible politick body, with the highest respect to his *Royal Authority*, who is the alone Head, and Lawgiver thereto. It is known that he hath given an express *Charter* for the same to his *Church* under the *New Testament*, according to which the due limits, and bounds of that *spiritual Jurisdiction*, which he hath settled there, and the full extent hereof should be both keep'd clear, and closely adhered to, as an Interest of the Lord Jesus, which is as the apple of his eye, he hath join'd also these two great Interests of the Civil, and Ecclesiastick Power, in so entire a harmony, that tho they are to be ever keep'd distinct, yet are not to be divided from other, but



to move jointly in such a blessed, and desirable Union, as may most serve the great ends of the Kingdome of Christ, and the publick good of humane Society: and now when this great promise of *Christs* entring in a more conspicuous manner on the *Glory of his Reign*, is come to the birth, and begun to bring forth, which is that period, where to, it may be said, hath been reserved the *perfections of the Churches* visible state here on the earth, how highly desirable should it be to be found assistant thereto in such a day; but oh is it possible, that these who have such raised hopes of an *eternal Crown*, and *Kingdome in Heaven*, can have so low desires, or designs, how to be serviceable to the Kingdome of Christ here in the *earth*, yea when none can want an interest and room in this service, where it hath once a weight and value on their heart: but yet it maybe a matter of hope this day, that these who by so singular an appearance of God, hath now the *Sovereign Power, and Authority in these Nations*, are no less eminently fitted to appear for him herein, then they are stated under the highest engagements for such an end.

3. It is surely one of the *things of God*, and an interest which is purely sacred to him, wherein the spreading of his *Kingdome* in the World, is most nearly concerned; which lyes in a *serious and faithful Ministry to the Church*, and is of that concern, as it may be justly called, *Indicium*  
*stans*

*stantis & cadentis Ecclesiae*; for this is one of the highest *Ordinances of Christ* given to the Church, and that *way* which he hath himself consecrated for the inbringing and perfecting of the *Elect*; by which so great effects are wrought in the World, where ever there is a divine mission for the same to any part thereof, & the Church is in a building up there; an *Ordinance* by which most visible efficacy & supernatural influences are conveyed in a *moral way* under the blessing of that *institution*: but on the other hand nothing is more threatening to a *Nation*, as to the falling down of some dismal night of judgement, then the *corruption* and *debasing* of that which in it's own nature is so *excellent*, where things that are more extrinick and of a humane concern, are so much looked after, but that which is Gods part in the great intent of this erection is of so low regard; that if an Inquiry were made through a *great part of Britain*, they should find the dark places of the earth there stil amidst so bright a *day of the Gospel* as is now shining, & what a *multitude* is thus perishing thorow want of knowledge whilst it seems so little desired or designed, to have such a *Ministry*, whose highest study should be upon the great *Intent of Christianity*, to bring men to *Christ* not to *themselves*, and to allure and perswade their coming under his blest dominion and yoke; to press internal renovation of the heart and a necessity hereof, with that seriousness as might take

„ hold on their conscience, and let them see there  
 „ can be nothing more highly irrational then to  
 „ list in ane exterior profession and form of Re-  
 „ ligion , and not prove once upon their own  
 „ tryall the truth hereof in its power and effica-  
 „ cy , and whither it hath not a vital part which  
 „ lyes in ane inward life of Communion with  
 „ God ; for as this alone is such a *Ministry* that  
 should be the blessing of a *Nation*, and *Kingdom*,  
 so in respect of this, to be of such a *distinguishing*  
*Profession* tho in its self most agreeable to the  
 truth , should be of no regard where this is wan-  
 ting , as a test for so *sacred ane Office*. It is, I  
 hope, unquestionable , that the *trust of the souls*  
*of men is greater*, then any temporal concerns of  
 a *Kingdom*, or *State*, and how this *Ordinance* is  
 that which hath the most peculiar influence to  
*prepare the way of the Lord*, in this day for that  
 blessed and near approaching time , of his more  
*conspicuous Reign on the earth* in the *Glory thereof* ;  
 I abstract here from any thing *controversal* as  
 things are stated in the present day , only as to  
 what I hope , there may be an unite agree-  
 ment in by all , who have a deep sence on their  
 spirits , of the *blood and perishing of immortal*  
*souls* this way, and a serious respect to that Ca-  
*tholick* Interest of the *Kingdom of Christ* am-  
 ongst men. I know it was never a harder part  
 then in this age to *stemm such a tide* as seems yet  
 on the growing hand, of *prejudice* against the way

of truth, when so many are in the dark, tearing one another, and counting it desirable to have where at they may offend and stumble, whilst that study is not more followed to prevent, so far as is possible, mens taking of *offence*, even where it is not given, according that of the Apostle who is *offended and I burn not*: the *excess of disputing in this age* hath been a peece of our judgement, and the managing thereof so little to that end, of edification; but the *defect* may be no less evident on the other hand for the suitable improvements of *Christian prudence*, as a *duty and service to God* so absolutely necessary for the *regulating of duties*, according to the *circumstances of the Churches case*, and what the present day can bear without coolness or indifference in any concern of truth, which is that part of our *Religion*, that hath been too little improvén.

We are indeed blessed with an *unchangeable rule of Sacred Truth*, which hath no dependence on humane Counsels or Power, to change or alter the same, or on the mutable revolutions of time, and can never vary from its self, yet is the tenderness and wisdom of divine Condescendence, in the *application* thereof, to be so far regarded, as on of the most weighty parts of *Religion*, lyes therein, how *present duties* may be with a *judicious discretion*, directed to that great end of *edification*, since that which may be necessary in one case, as it is clothed, with other *circumstances*.

may be *hurtful*, and *destructive*. This is one of the most difficult *parts*, that such, hath allotted to them in the *times* we are fal'n in, who would stand in such a *gape*, & *breach*, where oppositions now thereto are so strong; and it may seem almost hopeless to crave justice in behalf of the *truth*, at the *bar* of *mens* *conscience*, when a *latitude* on *principles*, hath come to such a height, as the *authority* of *light*, is without fear controlled: yet on the other hand it may be feared, that the answering of that *Command* of the *Holy Ghost* is not suitably taken to heart, & the great consequence thereof, which is to *walk in wisdom*, towards *these who are without*, tho not being in that *Sence*, without the *Church*, yet as no less stated in a visible enmity to the truth, which is according to *Godliness*, then such could be: there hath been much serious study, and designs by the *Servants* of *Christ* in this age to *promot his Kingdom* in *Britain and Ireland*, and there are yet there eminently fitted for so difficult a service, how to gain and prevail with the furthest measures of prudence and judgement, upon the most obstinately prejudged as any in this day, there hath been also of late a singular improvement made and blest, for a more unite contending for the *Faith* once *delivered to the Saints* in so hazardous a time: but it is sure there is yet some further length and essay called for, upon this great service, for the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, in taking off letts and stumbling

bling blocks out of their way, who may be upon a sad *precipice* of breaking, and further alienation from the truth, and for some more full clearing of the same, from these designed *reflections* cast thereon, in such a way, as *convictions* might thus insensibly prevail, and gain ground with the greatest *Gainsayers*; whilst we know little what design grace may in this day have on such, and as the furthest regard should be kept to light, upon any *controverted truth*, without losing ground herein, yet should I judge it a door of hope to see these who are unite in the great concerns of *Truth and Godlines*, once meet in a more joint concurrence in behalf of these great things of God, which are not *controverted*, when the face of this *Generation*, is so threatening as to a further revolt from the *Christian Faith*, both in the *pureness*, and *power* thereof. This is to be a *work by its self*, which as it's of the highest *publick concern*, so does it require a more then ordinarie measure of *Judiciousnes* in following the same. My Unfitness to speak on such a *Subject*, should have restrained me herein, were it not to witness something of a *serious desire*, under which my soul is prest, for such an end, when the hazard of the perishing of so many who hath an *Eternal State* before them is so visible this day, and yet no further tryall made to gain and recover, according to that rule, and *practice of the Apostle I was all things to all, that I might gain some.*

*some.* Others can more fitly judge, as to the suitable managing of such a service, and how to fall in on the *right lib of duty* herein, only *some things*, I should wish were more designed, for taking off *prejudices*, and to breake thus one of the greatest *Engines of Satan* this day, against the interest of the *Ghospel*. 1. In coming a greater length by these who are of a serious spirit; to *Sacrifice private resentments, to that publick Interest of the Truth*, upon conceived *Injuries*, when its so evident what an influence *personal prejudice* this day hath to keep up distance, to highten differences, and caule further estrangement on such an account, from any fervent appearance for God; and this is surely one of the most honourable parts of a Christians work, how far he might overcome the distempers of others by humility, tenderness, and love, and walk in such a counter-motion to the spirit and temper of this day. 2. It is a service this day much cald for, to have *stumbleings* more prevented against these unquestionable settled administrations of the *Government of Christ in his Church*, so as the way and manner of his *Spiritual Kingdom* might be rightly understood; the proper *object* whereot is the *soul and inward man*, and it's great design to *restore & edify*, which is in such a way, that where it's truly answered, nothing can be more tender and healing and to attract any of a serious spirit to join in herewith; for it is a sad measure that the truth should suffer,



suffer, from the *weaknes* or *exorbitancies* of any. It was suitable for the Christian Church in the *primitive times* to plead that from *Heathens*, that the *offence*, and *practices* of none should be charged upon the *rule of their Profession*. 3. It were desirable also that further conviction might be served on these who are prone to stumble, how in the promoting of truth, and Godliness there is no pursuing any *divided interest of a party*, and that if such would once try and see, they can then judge, where the most *comprehensive interest* within time lyes, which all are jointly concern'd to promote, who hath any design on the Christian Profession for *eternal things*. 4. I shall but *add* this more, what an advantage should it be for the *truth*, and to conciliate a greater respect thereto, that all might see how sweet a *Contemperature and Harmony* there is betwixt pure zeal for God, which is according to *knowledge*, and the furthest *prudence* and *tenderneß* towards men, and how the *rule and spirit of the Gospel* can admit of no *bitterneß*, *wrath*, or *re-crimination*, which are so abounding this day in the Church, in perluing of *differences* upon any concern of the truth; for herein doth the *glory*, and *honor of our blessed Head* more eminently appear in securing the *concord*, and *unity of his Church*, under a *diversity of light*, and *judgement*, in some lesser differences about the truth by a *spirit of love*, and by its *power*, and *efficacy*

upon mens heart, in subduing the distempers of their *mind*, then by imposing the most *severe and absolute uniformity* in all things to be the measure of *Church Communion*; and it is ever found how this hath been, most easy, and practicable, among such who hath made the highest advance in the *life*, and *power of Christianity* then any else, since the nearer the *lines*, are to the *Center*, the nearer also, are they among *themselves*; and I must add herewith, that it may be little known what *convictive power*, might follow in a time of such high distempers as this, on a suitable application of that *wisdom*, which dwells with *prudence*, and comes from above, according to the *rule*, given for the same *James 3: 17.* to make a higher interest for the Kingdom of Christ, and to the saving of the souls of many, then now in an ordinarie way, would seeme possible.

4. As the furthest *tenderneß*, and *prudence*, is called for, to *prepare the way of the Lord*, for a further advance of his *Kingdom*, in taking out of the same so far as is possible these lets, and stumbling blocks, where the greatest hazard may be of offence; so should it be much preparatory also for a *higher service*, & a more unite appearing for God herein, and to stand in the most hazardous part of the *breach* of this day in behalf of that great interest of our Religion, which is upon the *Authority of God in his truth, and Testimony*, as the alone ground, on which the ultimate resolution of our Faith

*Faith* must found; since this is the very same *inconvertible terms*, to give to the *Divine Majesty the Glory of his Godhead*, and that tribute, which is most inviolably sacred, and essential to him, it would seem almost *incredible*, that such an *hour of the power of darkneſs* should fall in with the growing light of the *Ghoſpel*, as the strange prevalence of a *way*, which is to *commensurate the perfections of God*, and the greatest *mystery* of his truth, to our understanding, and to make *humane reason*, tho' corrupt, finite, and limited, to be the alone Judge, and measure of our *Faith* of divine things, when the highest principle of reason, which is *prima veritas*, without which *reason* hath no principle to rest on, & no *Standard* else, is this, that where the *God of Truth is the Revealer*, and that it's sure it is his *Testimony*, it must then be as *infallibly true*, as it is *sure he is God*, since it is simply impossible, to find ever another *foundation of truth*, and *certainty* but this. We are fal'n in times of great expectation as to a near approach of the highest *Glory of Christ's Mediator Kingdom* on the earth, and it would seem a strange *prelude* thereto, that so black a darkneſs should fall down, with so astonishing an encrease thereof, as tends not only to *eclipse* the same, but to deny him his *essential Kingdom*, who is the *only begotten of the Father*, and *brightneſs of his Glory*; yet I am sure it is a *sign* of that kind, as the *morning darkneſs*, which is

the darker the nearer it is to the day. It is indeed here, we may see an opposition to the Majesty of God, in such terms, that we might reckon humane nature could not be capable of, and be just matter of horror to a natural conscience, to see so numerous a party, who claims to be Adorers of *reason* turn'd so visibly madd on their *own destruction*. I know the furthest improvements this way; by *rational Inquiry* and *Tryal*, hath a greater Interest in Religion, and for strengthening of our Faith therein, then may be suitably apprehended; but it is sure the *ultimate Inquiry* herein can possibly go no further in the use of reason, but that what we beleieve is the undoubted *Revelation of God himself unto men*, & can we desire more when this is sure, for a full quiet, and acquiescence of the soul, tho it seem wonderful in it self, and exceed our dark, and limited thoughts, when it is impossible for him, who is *truth it self*, to lie, whose word is such, *cui non potest subesse falsum*; as it is no less sure that he who is infinitely good, can not deceive, or put an imposture in stead of truth in their hand, who trust him; *divine truth* is the first groundstone of our happiness, but is not conceivable by the *light of nature*, to beleieve his being *truly God*, and not the truth also of his *promises*, which ever conform not only to the *things signified*, but to his *intent* therein, who can never *delude*, or *deceive*. But whilst I have been put to some thoughts with a male-

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ment on an appearance of *such a kind against God* this day amongst *men*, not only within *Christendom*, but by such as once layd claim, to the *Protestant Profession*; some *Reflections* tended to give more clearness, and settlement, to my own spirit herein, which I shall but in a few words mention, 1. that when the darkness of an *implicite Faith*, and reliance on men under *Papery* hath been so sore baffled, & turn'd out of credit in such an inquisitive World as this, loe *Satan* hath taken himself to the *very contrare air*, and knew how to fall in with the temper of a *brisk, bold, and daring age*, that he might settle a *new* opposition against God, and the interest of his *Kingdom*, wherein he hath unite, and fixed his greatest strength, so that since he was cast down from his *Throne* by the Power of the *Gospel*, he hath not had a greater *Triumph*, then in this attempt, how to bring man upon it, and sett humane reason at once both against *God*, and *it self*, in such a manner, as to be it's own *Executioner*, and in subjecting the highest mysteries of truth to it's comprehension to make it not only equal to God, but give it a preference to him, who is the alone former thereof, which I must reckon to be the nearest approach that *humane nature* yet ever made to that *sin*, by which the *Angels* did first fall, and that it is the *master peece* of that *Prince of darkness*, and his *ultimus conatus* against the truth, who knows his time is short: 2. It may be with  
 after

astonishment, discernable under what a stroke such are as not to see, whither this way hath led them, and how far the Holy God, hath thus confounded their *reason*, as visibly, as once these were in their *Language*, who would attempt to *build a tower up unto Heaven*, when this way, left to ane absolute uncertainty, ever to fix their *Faith*, the *Standard*, and measure whereof, must be the *comprehension of reason*, which hath no firm or intallible ground to settle on besides it self, and whilst they cannot make the *reason*, and judgement of others, as considerate, and knowing as themselves, meet with theirs, the result thereof is to put a judicial madnels in the room of *reason*, so as to conceive a *created, & dependent God* to give divine homage to, and that at once he should be both a *God*, and a *Creature*; and adore a *comprehensible Object* with *divine Worship*, yea this way without a contradiction to themselves they can give no faith to the *Creation* as being brought purely out of nothing, or to the *Resurrection* of the dead, as wholly incomprehensible to *reason*, they must deride *Israëls Passage* thorow the *Red Sea*, or the *Suns standing still* on *Josua's* call to verifie  
 „ that *Rom. 1: 21*, because that when they knew  
 „ God, they glorified him not as God, but profes-  
 „ sing themselves to be wise, they became fools,  
 „ thence is such ane amasing stroke thus inflicted on their reason, for it may be said as in the Poëtick Fiction of *Phaëton*, that when he sought to  
 guide

guide the *Chariot of the Sun*, for a time, he was like to burn the earth, until he was struck with a *thunderbolt* from Heaven; so hath this party tryed how to manadge *reason*, as the supream Directour, and Judge upon all that is sacred, as they have gone near to destroy both *Reason*, and *Religion* at once, but tho the strongest rational Arguments, with such seem to bear no weight, I doubt not ere long of such a visible demonstration of the Divinity of our ever *Blessed Redeemer*, which he shall give before the World, that he may be known to be *God*, as will for ever end this *Controversy*. There is a constraint on the *Elect Angels*, to admire what they cannot comprehend of the *Mystery* of the Gospel, and that incomprehensible love of God to fallen man, but oh what a return, and recompence does *engaged mankind*, give to him who counted it no robbery to be equal to God, yet to become man for our sake, that in the face of the greatest brightness of light, does bear such enmity to his *Godhead*, as the eye of *reason* must be put out to serve this end, and when such a *light* is turned into *darkness*, how great is that *darkness*! I have thought to the furthest to know, where the strength of such a *Profession* could possibly ly, this being so great a *Head*, whereon the *truth*, or *nullity* of the *Christian Faith* is so visibly stated; and I durst appeal their *reason* and *conscience* if a resolute aversion, to the *Person* of our *Redeemer*, in the union of  
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the divine, and humane nature, and to the *pr*  
*renes*, and *sanctifying* vertue of the *Ghospel*, *ly*  
 not more in the *will*, then their *judgment*, and  
 be not the leading principle of this strange Con-  
 troversy. For the true *Interest of reason*, in *Re-*  
*ligion*, I may say, it hath been one of the *great*  
*studies of my life*, to improve the same, for a  
 solid, and judicious establishment in; the Faith  
 of the *Ghospel* (which I should still commend  
 with the greatest respect to any of a serious spirit)  
 but herewith I could possibly go no further with-  
 out giving up with all use of *reason*, or give a  
 higher preheminance thereto, then in a full *evi-*  
*dence*, that what we are called to believe is of *di-*  
*vine Revelation*; nor can desire more to warrant  
 a *hope and confidence*, tho *against hope*, as to all  
 rational grounds, but that it surely hath a *divine*  
*promise* to lean on. It might be judged, *Sathan*  
 needed no humane assistance to these *fiery darts*,  
 which are so usually thrown at the choicest *Chri-*  
*stians*, to shake their *faith* on this head, but it is  
 not at an ordinarie rate, that its great *Author* hath  
 designed the *tryall* thereof. 3. There is one  
*Reflection* further hath affected my spirit upon this  
*Controversy*, as to the *junction of time*, when it  
 is become now so contagious and prevalent, whilst  
 we are to *pray*, *wait*, and *hope* with assurance  
 for the renting of the *vail* yet off many dark pla-  
 ces in the earth, to make way for that *higher Glo-*  
*ry of Christs Reign* thereon, which shall be to the  
 gentile

gentile Church as life from the dead; yea when it is drawing so near to that great Revolution of Providence, when *Shem*, and *Japhet* shall yet again meet in the same *Tents*; how so strong a conspiracy is on foot to oppose the same, and to shut any door whither for *Jews* or *Pagans*, to enter at upon the Christian Faith, but where they find so venerable a thing, as *reason* standing in their way to tell them, that the most essential part of *Christianity* is incompatible therewith, & that they must subject themselves to the authority of *humane Judgment*, and not to *God*, if they design to be *Christians*. It is a famous passage, I must relate here of that great *Jewish Council*, held in *October* 1650. in the plain of *Ageda*, 30 leagues from *Buda* in *Hungary*, to search the Scripture concerning the *Messias*, and the truth of the New Testament, where after seven dayes debate about the same, and not a few Arguments offered from their continued desolation and captivity since the time of *Christ*; some Popish Deputies at last were admit, who in stead of promoting the Christian Faith, pressed them to believe the Worship of the Saints departed, and of the *Virgin Mary*, upon which that great Assembly broke up in a tumult, crying no *Christ*, no *Images*, no *Woman God*, and cast dust on their heads, upon so irrational a Blasphemy: It is true, some of the *Rabbies* then, did much desire Protestant Divines to

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„ have met with them, but that the Pope and  
 „ Emperor had joined to shut them wholly out,  
 „ tho thousands of Strangers were then present  
 „ at a meeting of so great expectation, of the  
 „ Jews coming in to the Christian Faith; but  
 I mention it for this end, what a cry would  
 that have made, if they had been told of a crea-  
 ted and dependent God, & to subject themsel-  
 ves here to the gteatest contradictions to Reason.

5. I shall now in the close but *add* this further,  
 what should be specially expected upon the grow-  
 ing state of *Christs visible Kingdom in the World*,  
 that as these Fogs & Mists which have been raised  
 upon the *authority of his truth*, will be then quickly  
 dispelled, so is there a *higher Tribute* to be given  
 into him of *the Glory of his Works, and the Out-*  
*goings of his Providence about the Church in*  
*these last times.* I know, the work and busines  
 of this day lyes not here, or in designs of that  
 nature, but it were well if much of that which  
 makes the greatest noise this day in the way of *Re-*  
*ligion*, had its room filled with so choise a *study* as  
 this is, tho it is indeed one of the peculiar en-  
 dowments of the Spirit of God, given to some  
 more eminently then others, to be *skilled in the*  
*Methods and Deeps of Providence*, and to under-  
 stand aright how the *Work of God* lyes towards  
 the *Church*; and his designs therein, according  
 to these discoveries given of the same in his  
 Word, and what *watch of the night* we are now  
 under;

under; but on this *Head*, I shall speak to a few grounds, whereon this *Tribute to the declarative Glory of God*, from his great Works of Providence about his Church, will in another manner be rendred to him then heretofore.

I. Because it is surely in this way of his great and extraordinary Works, that the Lord does design a more eminent discovery of himself, then in all these times that are hitherto past, and will thus enter his Church on that *brightness and splendor of his second coming*, which belongs to the last ages; when his going forth in the greatness of his strength will be with that evidence, as shall sease the World with fear and astonishment; and when he is in another manner to glorify himself in his People, then was formerly in these *suffering times*, which are now past, wherein his Glory was to shine forth in the eminency of the *passive graces of his spirit*; for now is the *Mystery of God*, in what yet remains thereof to be finished, in another way to take place, as shall call the Generation that's coming up to such an *observing and admiring Work* of the great Acts of God, that may need a more then ordinarie measure of grace to answer the same: but we must look for great things of Judgment, coming on, to be accomplished, as well as of mercy, the *Vyalls of Divine Wrath*, and last *Plagues*, are but in part poured out, wherein the appearance of God will be with much terror to the World, and that last

Triumph of his Justice within time, will not be of ane ordinarie kind; we are to expect great *shakings of the Nations*, and times of *breaking down*, as well as of *building up*, which are yet to come, and drawing near.

II. Because we are entred on these *times*, when the Lord is in a more singular way then heretofore, to put the whole Generation of his People, on that *part of Divinity*, and the study thereof, which relates to his *Works*, and that great Mystery of *Providence* about his Church; when the *Key* shall then be put in their hand for opening up, and a more full understanding the way of the Lord in these *times past* under the New Testament. This is indeed a weighty part of *Divinity*, which is reserved to the *latter times* in the perfections thereof, and these higher improvements, to be made on that blessed *study*, then was attainable in former ages, when his work now is coming to a more *full point*. It hath been remarkably the businels of this age, to make a more accurate search, and some greater discovery upon *natural causes*, and the workings thereof, but I doubt not, that ere long the inquisitive World, shall be in another manner awaked, and their *Inquiries* run in a higher channel above all *second causes*, to see and admire the great *Acts of Providence*, in the *Divinity* thereof, and not what is *humane* therein, but as they are by way of Eminency the *Works of God*, in the brightness of his immediate  
appea-

appearance in the same. It is one of the dismal signs of the present time, how much the spirits of men are at work to darken so far, as possible the most eminent *Discoveries of God in his Works*, and in the most extraordinary revolutions of humane affairs, as if they would set bounds and limits to him, according to the course and order of second causes, and subject, both the truth of his *Word* and his *Works* to the comprehension of their *reason*, tho some civil respect, they will give, and the name of his being the *prime cause*, but shut their eyes on what is more extraordinary and solemn in any piece of his work. I would yet point at some *special Heads*, that belong to this choise part of *Divinity*, which we are to expect, will in another manner be opened up, and I desire to rejoice in the hope hereof. 1. As to these more *singular cases of Providence*, which hath been in the Churches course, since her *first translation* from the *Jews* to the *Gentiles*, with the issue and consequences thereof, contrare to the rules or principles of natural reason, which is an inquiry to be more fully improven, then whatever hath been attained this way; when men shall see the *end of the Lord* herein, with such evidence as shall tend to *clear all by-gones* in his work. 2. These remarkable *Periods of time*, wherein the *Prophecetical Part of the New Testament*, hath been successively brought forth in their proper *Season*, as was foretold, is yet to

have the *scall* more fully taken off, and that *vail*, which was over them, so as it shall be clear and easy to see how the Lord hath not only kept his Word and Truth to his Church, but hath kept these times also exactly, to which such great *events of Providence* did relate. 3. There is a greater discovery yet to be made, then hath been hitherto, how the *Church hath been led in a right way*, and by a straight line in her whole course, through that *long*, and *terrible Wildernes*, which she was to pass, under the dispensation of the *Gospel*; and what eminent *services* the Saints have been put on in these strange measures of their *warefare*, which was then allotted to them, and in their *overcoming work* thereby; yea what a higher *Triumph* our *blessed Redeemer* hath had in the *Faith*, and *patience* of his People in so dismal a time, then in any external flourishing state of his Church, so as it might be said it was then *day*, as to the *presence of his spirit*, and *irresistable efficacy of his truth* on his followers, when it seemed otherwise as the darknes of *midnight*. 4. There belongs to this part of *Divinity*, some higher breaking up of light, yet to be made on that *Mystery of the Communion of the Saints* here with other, in the *way of providence*, and what a joint interest they have herein, as to what hath been more singular in the Lords way, and disposal about others of his People: we have little understood what an *enriching trade*, we might drive upon



upon that *stock* of these *ancient experiments* of Christians in following the Lord, and these eminent tryalls they have made of the truth, who hath images past gone before, and what a *Pawn* is thus put in our hand, for a further strengthening in the Faith; yea what publick interest thus the whole *Church of Christ* hath, in some eminent acts of Providence about particular Christians, which in the import and greatness thereof was not given for themselves only, but as a publick concern to the whole *Generation*, that seek after God in their day, and for the times to come, according to that *Psal. 10: 3. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. 5.* I must add, one great improvement of this *special Head of Divinity*, which will yet be above the measures of times past, in the extent of that *Reference*, and *Appeal*, before *Angels and Men*, in behalf of the *Truth*, and *Faithfulness of God*, for what he hath spoken and promised to his Church; and is that *Tribute of praise*, which in a higher degree is to be payed in to him, now when it's so near to the close of time, then by that great testimony of *Joshua 25: 14.* how not one thing had fail'd of all the good things the Lord had then spoken in behalf of his Church, but had fully taken place, and was the same *Appeal*, which *Solomon* made *I. Kings 8. 56.* for this with a higher glory and evidence is to be the *Testimony* of the latter days, when it's drawing near to that magnificent close and period of *Propheticke*

*Chronology*, and finishing of the *Mystery of God* therein; how his *spotless truth* hath as the *Sun* in his *strength* kept it's way and course amidst all these dark clouds, which hath spread to darken the same; and no *promise* or *prediction* of that sacred record of the *Scripture*, hath ever fail'd or fallen to the ground, now when it's drawing so near to the *perfect Day*. It is true each *age*, hath had their proper *measures of light*, in order to the service of that time, and something peculiar allotted in the dispensations of *Providence*, yea some greater eminency did belong to these *times past*, when the sufferings of Christians did most abound, in the *adventures of Faith*, and in the *tryal of love*, then in after times, but as to higher discoveries of the *works of God* & the *depths of providence* about his Church, these was reserved to that *period*, when the *Mystery of God* hereon should be more fully persfited, and in this respect it's to be said, *blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh*, to such a solemn time, and to have his lot fall therein, as is spoken *Dan: 12: 12*.

III. But for a further clearing of this *Subject*, since the *Glory of the Kingdom of Christ* is so nearly concern'd in the discovery and entertainment of his *Works*, in the day thereof, and now when a more eminent appearance thereof is near, that *Kingdoms and Nations* in their *Complex Body*, shall in a more solemn way be the *Lords*; It should be expected that the *return and oblation of praise* upon

upon the great *Acts of his Providence* shall be more remarkable, as a *publick deed of Nations, and Churches* then hath yet hitherto been; yea that when the Lord does in any singular way appear, for their security, and standing, by *Providences of a publick and national extent*, that a *gratulatory retribution*, on their part must be of the same extent, under a *publick care and regard*. It is true, there is a settled *frame of subordinat means*, by which the Providence of God does work in the great designs thereof, that we are called to regard, wherein I doubt not, but the *Ministry of the Angels* hath the greatest interest, as one of the great *Ordinances* he hath settled in behalf of his Church, tho as to their *special offices, and delegate service to particular Churches and Christians*, is something that's more dark; but it may be hoped will ere long be with a clearer evidence known in these great transactions of Providence, which are yet to take place, when a *nearer Communion* may be then attained betwixt these *blessed Spirits*, and the *Saints* here on the earth, then is yet known, but tho there is no time wherein the Lord will not put honor on *instituted means*, and on that established *order of his working*, yet whilst most have such ordinar thoughts of God herein, and are so ready to fix their eyes wholly on *men*, his honor is concern'd to let the World know he is God by more extraordinary demonstrations, yea such are most of the *great events of his Word*,

which are yet to be brought forth as cannot possibly in an other way be expected. But on this *Subject* I would humbly offer some few reflections, which should be matter of a serious regard.

1. That as its highly becoming, on some *eminent piece of the Work of God*, or publick deliverances, for a Nation or State to have *solemn and publick returns of thankfulness* to him thereon; yet is it strange how so little regard should thus be to have the greatnes of any such mercy *sought out*, and the same *publick care extended*, for keeping up a *venerable remembrance* thereof, so that such a service of *Gratitude* be not bounded with the transient work of a day, since otherways it is a most *essential want*, and with holding a proper and important part of that *Tribute*, which is due into God herein, for there can be no suitable regard to serve the end of such *Providences*, and what was so straitly enjoined of the Lord under the *Old Testament*, which was the *Churches* continued practice there; yea of the same *moral and perpetual use* in all after times, if it should not be still a *publick trust* under the furthest *humane care* to promote the same, tho *divine Record and History* for this intent does now cease.

2. But as this hath an unquestionable *eye on Churches*, and a *Christian State* to design the most honourable respect, and entertainment of the *great Acts of God* in their day, and is made their *proper talent* to answer to; so does a just exoneration

tion herein, call for the most *exact scrutiny* and *search* on the *truth* and *evidence* thereof, on which the weight, and credit of this *service* does so far depend, to cause a more *full assent*, by these who come after to such a testimony, that these rare Providences, wherein the Lord did thus make himself known, were not only in the present time *sought out*, and enquired unto, under their *proper circumstances*, but by such of greatest weight, and advantage, for a work of this nature; whose sincerity and judiciousness might be convincing, and the integrity of such an *Intent*, cleared from any partial respect or end, but altogetherly for *exalting the Majesty of God*, and strengthening men in the *Faith*, by so great a *seal to his Truth*, and for the interest of the *Posterity*; yea wherein these who in some lesser differences did not fully meet in the same *Judgment*, yet might intirely unite, in such a *service* and *testimony* as this.

3. Where the Lord makes himself known in more *illustrious acts of his power*, as may be called *Magnalia Dei*, to some particular *Nation*, and *Church* beside others, who herein are in a more then ordinaire way interested; it might seem equal, and answer to the highest reason, they should be of that value, as to be entred on a *National Record*, and have that concurrence of *humane authority*, to make the evidence hereof as *authentick*, as the *publick deeds*, or *rights*, which

belong to such a state. It is true, there is no want of *Histories*, and the Church hath been blessed with that singular mercy of *Martyrologies* by faithful and impartial hands, to attest the power of divine grace, and supports of the spirit given to sufferers for the truth, and of late it was of great use the concurrence of *Civil Authority* to that *Work of the History of the Church of Eng<sup>d</sup> and*, that's now extant, by an *excellent Writer*; but for this intent, it is something distinct by its self, with respect only to these *Monuments of Providence*, relating to a *particular Church*, that are of *publique, clear, and uncontrolled evidence*, to have the *remembrance* thereof with the *highest honor*, kept up, and secured from the prejudices and cavills of men thereat; yea to such *Pas-sages* in that day, whereon the *Signature*, and *Impress* of the more immediate appearance of *God* hath had most full and bright evidence; these great *changes* of a *publique interest*, which hath then occurred, wherein some extraordinary *Conjunction* in the course of *Providence*, might be seen, above *natural causes*, and the ordinarie way of *Gods Working*, such interpositions of his wonderful power, by which he hath designed to put some eminent honor, on *acts of trust*, and relyances on his truth, as might be *exemplary to after times*, and serve for that end, that they who come after, might sett their hope on *God*, and not forget his *Works* Psal. 78: 7. yea extraordinary *Acts* also of divine

*Divine Judgment*, whereby he hath appeared in some unusual manner, to vindicate the honor of his *Laws*, against publick and notorious violations of the same, which may be clearly seen were not designed for *that age* only, but as a *publick concern* for after times.

4. Can it be questioned, that since that *Sacred Canon of the Scripture* is sealed, and consigned to the *Church*, to have no more addition thereto, but that it's now a part of the highest *trust* upon the *Gentile Churches*, to have a most venerable respect for conveyance of the *great Works of God*, from one *Generation* to another, & to bear such evidence thereof, as the nature of these things is capable of, for a *moral certainty*; yea that this might be on such *tryall*, as should silence and convince the most inquisitive, and suspicious spirits of men herein; this is of a serious and weighty import, if it were considered: 1. How so high a concern of the *Glory of God* is thus intrusted to *tradition by humane testimony and record*, and to the credit thereof, as that way only which the Lord hath now fix'd for the convoyance of his marvelous works to after times, on which he once put that value as to give them a special room in *Sacred Writ*, and tho there is no such way now to attest the same, yet is not the weight of that service taken off the *Church*, which is mentioned *Isay 62: 6.* to be the *Lords Remembrancers and Recorders of his great Acts*, as the *Original* there bears. 2. It is un-



is unquestionable that he hath reserved the greatest of his Works, wherein he will most eminently appear, to the *last times*, and what a loss hath it been to the Christian World unto this day, that unfaithful part which we must charge upon *former ages*, in no suitable regard to have such an interest and treasure, with a *publick care*, secured for the posterity, through which the credit and honor of *tradition* hath been so much broke as hath rendred the use thereof of small effect.

3. And it's known how difficult a part it is to gain credit in this day, to the truth of what's more extraordinary in *passages of providence*, even where the relaters thereof hath as to their own conscience and conviction the most full assurance, and hath designed what Inquiry was suitable in such a case; whilst the want of a more unite and publique concurrence takes off so much of that weight, which it might have in after times; but I have confidence, that a higher service of this kind in the improvement of so great a *Talent* for the honor of God, does yet wait on the *Church*, & succeeding race, as shall tend to bring up what hath been detain'd of such a rent and tribute of praise, yea that these whole *Lot* shall be in the dayes that are now coming, and fall in with the growing state and glory of the Kingdom of Christ to see these things, which will exceed the thoughts and faith of this day herein, shall see and enjoy such *Records* of these times, where the great

great intent shall be of that kind *Revel. 15: 3*:  
*Great and Marvelous are thy Works, Lord God*  
*Almighty, Just and True are thy Ways thou King*  
*of Saints*, and where the credit of such a testi-  
 mony shall not be *personal* only, but *national* in  
 a more solemn, unite concurrence herewith then  
 hath been hitherto known.

4. It is on this *Subject*, I must *add* further,  
 that a *traditional conveyance* of more special and  
 momentous things of Providence, might be of  
 much use, were it suitably improv'd, to have a  
 remembrance thereof continued in a *Family Line*  
 and *Relation*, which is one peculiar way, where-  
 by the *present Generation* might declare the truth  
 and faithfulness of God to the *next*. It is true,  
 there is no serious Christian, but is thus list'd,  
 and accountable on such a service to put to his  
*seal*, by some explicit personal testimony,  
 that God is true, upon his tryall hereof, and most  
 specially to improve that season, when it is near  
 to the *close and shutting up of time*, that with his  
 last and dying breath he might bear the same wit-  
 ness to the truth of Christ, and to the advantage  
 and excellency of his way and service, which he  
 did in the whole course of his life past, and of  
 that joy, complacence & assurance of mind, which  
 these have found, and now hath in the way of  
 truth; but there is something more peculiar in  
 this *Testimony*, to be understood, with respect to  
 these to whom things in a more singular manner  
 hath

hath been allotted then to other Christians, in the way of Providence, and hath in the *Record* and *Journal* of their life had more extraordinary *Remarks* and *Confirmations* from the Lord, as gives higher accels to this service, and adds to the value of such a Testimony. I would offer but a few thoughts on such a *Head*, which may possibly seem a strange and dark thing to some:

1. It was once for a long time that the *Series of the Church* was kept up in a *Family Line* from *Abraham* to the 12 *Patriarchs*, and what a rare course and conduct of Providence was thus transmit to after times, which is so great an interest, and treasure to this day, and tho that *conveyance* was by an infallible spirit, yet is this so far *exemplary* thereby, for such a confirmatory witness, by observing Christians, to the truth, when it comes to their *last improvement of time*, and of what hath been more signal and eminent in the Lords dealing with them, that it should be one of the choicest *Legacies* they could bequeath to their *Relations*, yea a singular mean to have Religion thus kept alive in a more venerable respect thereto in a *Family State*, and to fix stronger engagements to the way of God, on their *surviving Friends*.
2. I hope there be no serious discerning Christian, but hath some more *select Observations of their life*, and what hath been most remarkable in the course of Providence towards them, layd up, something of which might be of *singular use*, besides their

their own personal interest therein, to a further establishment of others in the way of truth; tho any improvement of that kind needs much *Christian prudence and sobriety* to qualify the same; yea, were this suitably designed in such dismal times, we are now fall'n in, what access might private Christians have, these specially who have gone through more extraordinary tryalls then others, to be thus a *publique blessing* to their Generation; and how honourable a service were it for God, to advance the credit of Religion, and fix deeper impressions of the same on mens spirits, that these who have been admit to more *special adventures of Faith*, amidst the various conflicts of their day, should in the *close* thereof have this as their proper work to *deliver the truth* off their hand, which they had received, with their *seal and testimony* to the same, as that which they had proven and tryed in a more then ordinarie way, and which had brought them safe and honourably through, as was the last Words and *Witness* of *David* 1 *Kings* 14. *Who hath delivered my soul out of all distress*: this I humbly judge falleth in as the last and peculiar service of a Christian, when it hath the advantage to be more valuable and convincing to others, then in any other time of their life, & were a thing highly desirable, that a *work of this kind* should be suitably prepared, to prevent a surprisal of death, & going silent off the *stage*, which hath been the lott of these who have shin'd most brightly

brightly thereon; and as it surely hath the most opportune season in the *last Scene of a Christians Work*, so may it be yet more designed and regarded in the *last ages of time*, when there is to be expected such *Testimonies for God*, and to the *Glory of his Truth*, as will much exceed the *ordinar Standard* of these times past, and we are now in. The full sense of that *Scripture John 3: 33.* should have a great weight herein, *he that hath received his Testimony, hath sett to his seall that God is true*, where there is a peculiar debt, and trust on the one hand that is put on such, who hath the truth and testimony of God consign'd for tryall of the same; and a discharge thereof, which on the other hand they stand accountable for *putting to their seall that God is true*, which is the most solemn way of a *Testimony* before men; tho some may be thus in a special manner stated by higher engagements to sanctify God before others, and when some more singular passages of Providence comes under such a witness and seall as a *distinct part of a Christians Testament* in his parting with time, it brings the strongest evidence that humane testimony can possibly have for conveyance of the same.

F I N I S.

A N  
 APPENDIX

TO THE

*Foregoing Discourse,*

In both the P A R T S thereof.

**T**HOUGH the intent of what was at first directed to the *private use* of some, now made *publick*, was with that design of brevity, and to keep off any enlargement, as it may seem rather an *Index of things*, than a *Discoursing* of the same; Yet, to prevent mistake, and for more clear understanding of what hath been principally design'd herein, both as to the *Personal Establishment of Christians*, in this State of their Trial and Warfare, and with respect of the *Publick State of the Church*; it hath oblig'd me to offer some additional touch, in a *short review* on the same, but

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more

more specially on *some truths*, which I humbly judge, though of great import in the present time, yet have not been touch'd by others, so far as is known to me; Which I shall speak a little farther to in some distinct *Sections*.

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## S E C T. I.

**I**T might seem unsuitable, to set down the *Contents*, as is usual, of what is most specially handled in a directive way, in the *First Part of this Discourse*; where such a variety of things is there wrapt up, in so few words, on that Great Subject: but, since it's ordinary for many to pass their Judgment on the whole of any such Discourse, with a short glance at a part only; I shall offer, in the room thereof, some few *Propositions* drawn forth out of the same, as they lie closely together in a joint *Series*, and *Cohereence* to give light, and assistance for so high an end, they are directed to; and, on things, which may be remote from the thoughts and judgment of most who are enter'd on that high distinguishing profession of the Christian Faith.

*Prop. 1.* That the highest rational enjoyment of a Christian within time, does surely lie in such an assurance, and quiet of Mind on the *Certainty of Divine Truth*, as can Answer so great a Discovery made hereof to Men, and the greatness of that



that adventure they must shortly make thereof; nor can the *Ultimate Inquiry* about the event, and full enjoyment of our hope, to secure the heart herein, go farther, than to know there is a Divine Testimony, to warrant the same, and that we are in sure terms herewith.

*Prop. 2.* There must either be an *entire rest, and settlement of a Christian's Spirit on Divine Truth, or none at all*, since there can be no possible fixing betwixt these; or relief, where the ground of it cannot fully support the Soul, though all visible refuges, or humane assistances should fail.

*Prop. 3.* An *implicit, and light assent to the Christian Faith*, and the great and astonishing things thereof, is a *degree of Atheism; and indifferency herein*; nor can there be a just claim to so high a profession as this is from the residue of Men, until once it be a solemn, and proper business by it self, for Men to sift, and prove their own Soul, in the greatest recess, and composure upon their joyning in with the Faith of *Christ*, with inward consent, and no influence from external motives, of *Example, Education, or humane Authority*, herein, but purely on its own evidence.

*Prop. 4.* That Humane State considered *without God*, and the Faith of the Excellencies of his Nature, should tend onely to let Men see their Life to be a *Curse, and Torment*, rather than a

bleſſing, if there were no *Supernatural help*, which is above themſelves, againſt the Evils and Miſeries of time, and of a future State.

*Prop. 5.* Either a *Chriſtian*, or of no *Religion at all*, is an unſwerable *Dilemma*; either the enjoyment of God, according to the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Chriſtian Faith, or no poſſible comfort in the Light, and enjoyment of a *Deity* for Men, if they be Sinners; and ſo as a *Deiſt*, ſince Sin enter'd on the World, is a pure contradiction to it ſelf; when no ſuch Sacred thing as Religion hath ever elſe had a being on the Earth, but that which might tend rather to juſtifie Atheiſm, and to put the higheſt contumely and affront on the *Divine Nature*: Nor had the Jewiſh Religion another being but in the Faith of *Chriſt*, and where it wants that, it hath none at all.

*Prop. 6.* As there is but one *Sun* that ſhines on this viſible World; there hath onely been one *Fountain*, and *Repository of Sacred Light* given from God unto Men, both in order to their duty, and hope, without which *Divine Record*, Heaven and Earth ſhould be ſhut up from other, by any eſtabliſht rule of correſpondence for the ſame; and the moſt excellent and eſſential part of Man, his Soul, have no directive, or comforting Light, both as to his preſent, and future State, or the way thereto, whiſt this lower Earth hath a *Sun* to ſhine thereon.

*Prop. 7.*

*Prop. 7.* The First *Entry of the Christian Faith*, does Essentially lie in the Faith of the *Old Testament*, and of a *Promised Redeemer*; So as Men cannot possibly be Christians, or enjoy the *Gospel* this day, if it were not on the certainty of that Blessed Record; and if this *Great Promise*, which was the first immediate object of the Churches Faith, and of that high value, as was worthy of their waiting, and expectation for 4000 years, had not been revealed, and made as sure as the performance now is.

*Prop. 8.* As the time of the *Old Testament* was still a waiting, and expecting time, and the whole dispensation thereof a *prelude* to that great design of Grace which was to be brought forth; so was the *Promise* on which they waited, in its nature, *absolute*, and *irrevocable*, without dependence upon any condition in Man; and was the alone *Original Right* of all the Promises they did enjoy, which, in him, onely are Yea, and Amen.

*Prop. 9.* Since the *first precise time*, and *entry of the Christian Faith* on the World, after the Fall, it hath yet never ceased to shine, and keep its course, or to be embraced by a peculiar People in a *Church Relation*, who were distinct, and separated from the residue of Men until this day; nor hath the *Churches Head*, in any Ages of time, ever wanted some part of his *Body* to converse with, as the peculiar objects of

his Love, and Delight ; and, for imparting himself too, by vital influences of Light and Power ; So that the uninterrupted *Succession of a Spiritual Seed* on the Earth until this day, since *Abel*, who, of Humane Race, first enter'd into Heaven, is no less evident, and sure, than the *Succession of Mankind* ; and though some periods of time have had a larger extent of the Church therein, and some higher interest in the ingathering of the *Elect* ; yet hath no Age ever wanted a proper share of that Glory, which the Lord would not restrict onely to some special times.

*Prop. 10.* Were it supposable, that the *Promised Messiah* was yet to come, it were not possible to look for its accomplishment in another way, or under other circumstances than what is recorded hereof in the Gospel, or that the *Redeemer*, according to the tenor of the *Old Testament*, should *act another part*, than what he did ; nor is there any variation betwixt the *Antient Creed* of the Church then, and that which is ours now under the *Gospel*, as to the Substance thereof ; but that the one was founded on the *Credit of the Promise*, and the other on its full assurance of its *accomplishment*.

*Prop. 11.* There is yet this *Essential change* now in the Christian Faith, that what *Abraham*, and *Moses*, were saved by, cannot *save us* ; but would be absolutely *mortal* to rest on the Promise of a Redeemer ;

Redeemer; or to believe, in general Terms, that he is come; but that this is he, whom *the Father sealed*, and sent into the World; and he alone, who, in the days of *Tiberius*, and under *Pontius Pilate* suffered at *Jerusalem*.

*Prop. 12.* The precise time of the *Sufferings and Resurrection of our blessed Redeemer*, was that great and solemn *Epocha*, to begin a new Week, whereon the Churches entry on the *bighest glory of time*, and on a *new State*, is to be dated; where the solemn observation of the *first day of the Week*, the *Lord's day*, had both its *rise and right*; the *exact time whereof* was so publick and famous, and of that high concern to the Primitive Church on this first entry unto a New World, as render'd it impossible to be in the least doubtfulness herein, or to have possibly fixed on another day, besides the clear Sanction of *Divine Authority* for the same; but the less seems to be of a peremptory, and *positive Institution* made use of for this end, should be the greater excitement to our observation thereof, since the Lord would have it inforced most from *internal Motives*, and herein both try, and trust the Love of his People.

*Prop. 13.* It was reserved to the Gospel State of the Church to be the Theatre of the greatest wonders both of *Providence and Grace*, above all that ever had been known to the World before, and was then in a singular way allot-

red to the first entry of that glorious Scene after the *Ascension of Christ*, which was to be acted under the New Testament, to have the *God of this World* put off his Visible Throne, and the whole *frame of Paganism* raised and extinct; to have so wonderful a change made on the whole face of the Earth, in the Planting, and Propagating of the Christian Faith; and in the most Savage parts thereof, by the *alone Evidence and Vertue of sacred Truth*, where no Humane Power could boast that their Arm, or Sword did bring this about; yea that the *visible extent* of the Christian Church within sixty years after the Ascension of the Lord, could exceed what it is this day.

*Prop. 14.* The Churches Increase, and extent of the Christian Profession, in these first times did most eminently appear in the *reality of vital Influences on Mens Souls*, and innumerable Examples of the Truth, and Power of Holiness, wherein the outgoings of the Lord Jesus, and Vertue of his Death, did with that wonderful evidence appear, as it's sure *one real converted Christian* is a greater Seal to the Christian Faith, than any external *Miracle*, or *visible Profession* hereof by many in a naked form; such being the frame, and Constitution of a real Christian, as the *Glory of the Godhead* is more eminently seen in the  
first

*first frame, conduct, and perfecting of such, than in the first frame of Man before the fall, or of the Angels: Since this is to make Saints, of the greatest Sinners.*

*Prop. 15. As it was to the times of the Gospel, that our Redeemer did reserve the highest discovery of his Love unto Man, so was it unto these times, that he did reserve the highest Testimony, and trial of the Love of Mankind unto him, both in Services, and Sufferings; and in the greatness of that Confirmatory Seal of Martyrdom, by the most excellent in the Earth, who were offered up as an oblation of Love to seal the Testimony of Christ with their Blood, wherein, no constraint of Light only, and Obedience from an alone Positive Institution, as in the typical Sacrifices under the Law, but from a constraint of Love, stronger than the flames they were offered up in; the number whereof, since that great Propitiation was offered up, is of that extent, as can only be known by him, who counts the number of the Stars.*

*Prop. 16. Such is the mystery of the Gospel, and that great design, wherein the Majesty of God would take satisfaction to himself by himself; for the saving of lost Man, as can never be taken up or understood, in a natural way, as humane Sciences are, yet is with as Bright, and full evidence made known by its own Light, and*  
Beams



Beams to the Soul of a Christian, as the daylight of the *Sun* is to our natural Sense.

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## S E C T. II.

**B**Ut since no Light, or Conviction of the Judgment can efficaciously work to an *intire settlement of the Soul on the certainty of Divine Truth*, without *internal evidence*, and the *Sealing work of the Spirit*, it is on that wonderful part of Christianity, which lies in the Truth of *inward experience*, which is the *Soul, and Life of our Religion*, I shall touch, what's more principally pointed at upon this Subject, in a few *Propositions* drawn forth from what is more fully held forth thereon.

*Prop. 1.* That such is this *Mystery of inward Experience on the Soul*, as hath a distinct evidence from any *moral influence by the Word* to the Judgment, tho' it cannot be divided from the same; and is the proper object of spiritual Sense, which no humane Power, or Angels can impart, but *God* hath reserved only to himself, as an earnest given to confirm, such as know what passeth betwixt him and their Soul herein, of a more full out-making of his Truth, and promise beyond any external Providence.

*Prop.*

*Prop. 2.* The enjoyments of Grace, and of a spiritual State this way, which are of the highest Substance, and reality, do not alone support, and strengthen a Christians Faith, by *inward Sense, and feeling* thereof, but by the most *exact, and judicious trial* of the same, as it is the *assured Seal of the Spirit of Promise.*

*Prop. 3.* It is sure, *that God is not known in the Earth, or enjoyed in Truth, in the Knowledge of Converse with him, but in the Light of inward Evidence, and Experience; and that Religion hath no true Interest among men or any real conquest to eternal Ends; but in this alone way of its Power, and efficacy on their Soul; so as that choice Company, who are now going through time on fresh and continued supplies of the Spirit of Grace, are these alone in whom the Christian Faith is kept alive this day in the Earth.*

*Prop. 4.* Tho' all who are entred in a reconciled State with God, must be *sealed by the Spirit*, which is the settled Priviledge of all who are under his conduct, yet are there *more near, and higher enjoyments of this kind, and in a more singular way* imparted to some than others for support to their Faith, where more singular trials, and a long interval of delay between the Promise, and Performance hath been in their Case.

*Prop.*

*Prop. 5.* This rare enjoyment of inward Experience of Divine things none can on trust or report from others know in the Truth thereof, which no humane Testimony or vocal Evidence can express, what is a secret betwixt God and the Soul alone; which no Assistance of their own Spirit or of any natural Cause could ever possibly impart, or make so discernable, and marvellous a change in their inward Case.

*Prop. 6.* Such is the Christian way and passage to Heaven, as were simply impossible, without the immediate Communion of the Holy Ghost, and real enjoyment of supernatural Assistances, and Comforts, which can have no possible rise from nature.

*Prop. 7.* It is not the Letter of the Word of Truth can save men, or objective Evidence hereof to the Judgment; where nothing is known of its internal Work. So as profess'd Christians for the most part, have the same need to be Converted to Christianity that Pagans have.

*Prop. 8.* The enjoyment of some of the Saints in this way of Experience, may be no rule, nor measure to others in the Trial of their State; since there are ever most different Sizes, and Growth amongst such within time as make so great a difference herein, nor have serious Christians the same advantage in a like measure to discern the workings of God on their Soul,

Soul, and try the same from the natural work of their own Spirit, as these who *by Reason of use have their Senses exercised to discern Good, and Evil.*

Prop. 9. Tho' the Sense, and Sweetness of Spiritual Enjoyments, comes not by the *Power, and Workings of Reason*, but *by the immediateness of the Divine Presence*; yet does it not exclude *such a discursive work* in the clearness of spiritual Reason, and Light, as can fully quiet the mind that here is no delusion, nor deceit, but is the alone work of the Spirit of Truth, who leads unto all Truth.

Prop. 10. That special design of the Lord in the *settlement of Churches in a visible State*, can neither be known or made effectual, but in this way to have external Ordinances carried on *with Life, and Power on Mens Souls*, and for enjoying of Communion by the Spirit with their *Blessed Head*; nor is it possible for a particular Church to subsist in a naked form of Religion, and external Services, if the Administration of the Spirit, and Power, therewith should be wholly withdrawn, but the quenching of the Light must then unquestionably follow.

SECT.

## S E C T. III.

**I**T's in a *review on this Subject*, that the greatness of that *Personal Tryal*, which is made by the certainty of *Inward Experience*, and the *quality of such Witnesses* as bear Testimony herein, and puts to their Seal, that *God is True*, in what he hath promised, may be understood in some further *Propositions* drawn forth of the preceding discourse thereon.

*Prop. 1. Spiritual Experience*, of what immediately passeth betwixt God, and the Soul's of Men, according to the settled Constitutions of his Word, and makes so present, and *marvellous* a change in their Inward Case, it's a *trial* upon the *whole vital part of Religion*; upon the internal Efficacy, and Power of Divine Truth, whereby the *moral Rule of Gospel Obedience*, is turned into *living and inward Principles*, and the Christian Soul thus made to be *the declared Epistle of Christ*, by an internal conforming of the same thereto, in an indissoluble Union of the Truth, and their Spirits together, being *chang'd into the same Image*.

*Prop. 2.* It's not on some rare, and extraordinary account, that *Jonas Tryal* is stated, but

but is known by innumerable re-iterated times of such enjoyments, to keep close with a near and tender walk in a Christians whole course, as *an anointing with fresh oyl*; so that the *Power of Religion*, can never be barren of *new Experiments of Divine Truth*, and inward enjoyments thereof, where with no less Evidence, they can see the *proper Cause, and Original*, than the *Truth of such marvellous effects*, and the *Object of their Faith*, in what God hath spoken in his Word to be now made the *Object of their Inward Sense, and Experience*, as *his Seal* put thereto.

*Prop. 3.* This is a *Trial*, especially made on so great a difference, as is betwixt the clearest act of the Judgment upon Divine things, and the real feeling of the same in the Power, and vertue thereof; betwixt the most sublime apprehension by *Theory*, and these *sensible Impressions by the Holy Ghost* on their Soul; yea how the greatest *objective means* in the way of Light cannot do, if there were not an *internal effective cause* that works Powerfully herein, where the *same Cause* which makes a Christian *first Live*, does empower him to *Move*, and *act for God* in the Services of their day.

*Prop. 4.* Nothing does more Work on Mens Souls, and afford unspeakable Joy to them, than what's made their *own*, and is their *proper and distinct*

*distinct interest in this mystery of inward experience, to know in themselves the internal demonstrations of the Truth they profess, in the power, and evidence thereof; and what great things have been transacted betwixt God and their Soul, these more remarkable times, have gone over them of his conduct, and immediate appearances in the course of their life; yea, to see how the same Spirit, that confirms the Truth of their State and hope for Heaven, does herewith confirm Christianity, and the great original charter of Divine Truth, by such an extract given to them hereof.*

*Prop. 5. They must first come and see, beyond, hearing by the ear, who would dive into these deep, and still waters of Christian experience; to know in what manner the Spirit of God, bears evidence to his own truth, and what strong impressions his work bath on the internal Sense of a Christian; yea, what a near commerce, and piercing intelligence is betwixt such, and their invisible head, in the way of his revealed truth, when it is with that evidence, and assurance of being God's Seal, and the first-fruits of the Spirit, as they could adventure their eternal State on the truth thereof.*

*Prop. 6. Such is the enjoyment of Spiritual Experience, as may not onely render a Christian to be a wonder to himself, in his reflection thereon; but might awake the most sublime, and*



and *Inquisitive Spirits* of Men, to some greater thoughts and search herein, as things of the highest consequence that's within time, to know that such a part of Humane race is on the Earth as are admitted to an *immediate Communion with the Deity by inward sense*, and to the enjoyment of such a *light*, as is immediately out of Heaven by the Spirit of God, and shines on none else of Mankind.

Prop. 7. Though the truth of *inward experience* of the great things of God be the *proper interest of a Christian* upon his own *trials*, yet is it a part of that *communion* which such have within time with the most excellent in the Earth, and these innumerable, both in the present, and former ages of all ranks, who have been the greatest *lovers of God*, and *adventurers for him*, with whom he hath so familiarly dealt, and witness hereby how great a *rewarder* he is of his own grace, in enjoyments both of *light and comfort*.

#### S E C T. IV.

I Have so far offered a short review, of the preceding discourse in a series of some propositions drawn out of the same, to clear what is more specially intended therein, and the joint necessity that Christians have in this militant

state, of the highest assistance to their Faith, both from *rational evidence*, and from the *internal work*, and *demonstrations of the Spirit of God*, which is a thing so incomprehensible to *natural reason*, and remote from humane sense, as the Spirit of most in this day seems to be on the rack how to oppose the same, and to divide betwixt the *moral part of our religion* and the *vital part thereof*; to take off thus the greatest seal that God hath given to the *divinity of his truth* upon Mens Souls; yea, to such a height is this strange *enmity* to the life and glory of our religion now come, under so bright a day of the Gospel, as nothing may be more clearly expressive of that *sin against the Holy Ghost*, and of a *doing despite to the Spirit of Grace*. We live in a time, when *Night* seems in a strange manner to be fallen down on the *whole Western Churches*, with such a horror of great darkness, that if our Faith stood not by an *absolute assurance from God*, we might judge Truth should quickly perish from the Earth, and that which remains of serious Religion amongst Men, at last die out; when so sad and Judicial are the *Signs* every where of this time, as might cause fear least the growing *Apostacy of the Gentile Churches* at last tend to a *final unchurching of the same*, as was of the *Jewish after the Ascension of Christ*. For what hath been particularly touched in the *sketching up of this Discourse*,

*Discourse*, of experiments in any more extraordinary way attained, in the *actings* of a *Christians Faith* in some singular cases, and higher intimacy of *communion with the Spirit of God* by such, then may be known to others; as it is not the *standard*, by which the truth and reality of Grace is to be judged, so I hope it will be found with that *caution*, and *sobriety* touched, as is suitable to the *Spirit*, and *rule of the Gospel*, and to the settled constitutions thereof.

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T H E

## SECOND PART

OF THIS

*Epistolary Discourse,**Farther consider'd upon a few special**H E A D S.*

**H**AVING found that *some things* which are pointed at there, and of a near concern to us in this day, for being rightly understood,

[ b 2 ]

have

have been with such *brevity* expressed, as renders the same more difficult and obscure, I have been constrained to offer some thoughts farther thereon, with a *humble reference* to the judgment and *trial* of such who truly inquire, and seek after the Truth, and takes the *present times* to heart we are now in, with a more deep sense, and impression of what *God does* threaten, than what is from *Men*, or any visible things.

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## S E C T. I.

**T**He *First Head* which hath been formerly touched and on the *first part of the preceding discourse*, is to what *period of time* the present state of the *Gentile Church* does now relate; and in what sense these *times of the Gentiles* which are yet to be fulfilled, *Luc. 21. 24.* and that *fullness thereof*, which must be brought in before the *in-calling, and Restoration of the Jews*, *Rom. 11. 25.* must be understood; this is a *great point of truth*, wherein I must, (so far as I can attain light) have a different judgment from other *expositors* I have seen thereon, to whom otherwise I bear a just honour, but cannot judge with them that to be dark, or difficult, which the *Spirit of God* makes so clear, that both these *Scriptures* bear one and the same *intent*; that *these times of the Gentiles*, and the *fulfillment thereof*

of

of which is to be perfected first before that *judicial vail of Blindness* be taken off the *Jews*, does most clearly respect the *successive course of the Gospel*, and ministration of Grace to the whole *Gentile Church*, in a *distinct and separate state* from the *Jews*; which *times* are in a great measure perfected, and drawing to the last period of the same, the *fulfilling whereof* will contemporate with the *Churches first entry on the highest splendor, and glory of the Kingdom of Christ* here on this Earth, when its *constitution* shall be no more of *Jews and Gentiles* under such distinguishing Names, and no *walls of partition* any more but where the *Lord shall be one*, and *his Name one* in this blessed frame of one *Catholick Church*, and these differences be then intirely swallowed up by the power and prevalence of Divine Love, and the sense of that *high Calling* to be Christians, and of their being made *partakers of the Divine Nature*. But since this is a *Subject* of such high consequence, I must yet speak a few things farther on the same to be seriously considered.

I. That as it hath been one of the greatest *deeps* of the wisdom and counsel of God about his *Church*, that *Israel* and the *natural off-spring of Abraham* should have been onely privileged, for so many *Ages*, from the whole race of *Mankind*, with a *Church-State, and Relation*, and have their *set and proper times* thus allotted to

them under the *Old Testament*, with a wall of partition herein set up from the *Gentile World*; so is it no less matter of *humble admiration*, that upon their rejection, and translation of the Church to the *Gentiles*, these should in the same manner have their times assigned under the *New Testament*, for the treaty and ministration of Grace in a distinct and separate state from the *Jewish race*; so that the constitution of the *Catholick Church* hath for these 1600 years past been made up entirely of the *Gentiles*, and restricted thereto, whatever income hath been of *Jewish Converts*, which yet can be but rarely reckoned, whilst so great a harvest amongst the Nations hath been reaped, and brought in by the Ministry of Christ, and power of his Divine Truth.

2. That these set, and limited times of the *Gentiles*, *Luc. 21. 24.* which must yet be fulfilled, and that fulness thereof, *Rom. 11. 25.* to be brought in, as they are expressly directed for one and the same intent, so is it thus clearly held forth by the Spirit of God, as it might seem not supposable how another sense should be imposed thereon, than that which is there meant by these times of the successive course of the Gospel amongst the Nations, and of that harvest to be reaped according to the set measure hereof in such a separate and distinct state.

Yea,

Yea, which must also take in the *times of divine patience*, in waiting so long on the whole *Gentile Church*, with that measure of their *trials and sufferings*, which was to be filled up by them under such a dispensation of Grace; and it's a *sad comment* that serves to make a Scripture truth dark, where the Great Teacher hath made it to the farthest obvious and plain.

3. Though the *close and Expiration of these times* may be judged, to be in some unusual manner, a *sad and judicial period*, as to the *degenerate state of the Gentile Church*, with an extraordinary withdrawing then of the Spirit of God, yet it is unquestionably clear, how it is in a *promissory way*, that the intent of the Scripture herein must be taken, and that such a setting of the Sun on the *Gentile VWorld* this will be, as shall immediately precede the *splendor and glory of the brightest day* which hath yet shined on the Church under the *New Testament*; according to that Testimony, *Rom. 11. 15.* that if the *rejection, and unchurching of the Jews*, was the *reconciling of the VWorld*, and made way to the first rise of the *Gentiles Church*, so will at last the *reception and restauration* of that people be a *new entry again of the Gentile*, as to a *new Resurrection and Recovery*, which shall be *as life from the dead*; this in faith, and with assurance I believe, where the Scripture hath, with such full evidence, made it an Article of our Faith. It's in a *Promissory sense* also this must be judged,



ed, that the full stroke on the Seat of *Antichrist* by the *fifth Vial*, is so evidently reserved to the final expiration of these set times of the Gentiles, and to that eminent displaying of the glory of *Christ's Reign*, which will then take place in that great and magnificent work of Judgment; for I must fix it in such a period, where the Spirit of God does expressly fix the same, 2 Thes. 2. to be by the brightness of *Christ's second coming*, which so clearly falleth in with that blessed, and bright Sun-shine of the State of the Gospel Church before the end, and is that great event of Providence, which immediately precedes *Israel's return unto Christ* under the 6th Vial; So that I must humbly say, under a constraint of light and evidence herein, my Soul does long for the final close of these set and limited times of the Gentiles,, until which that last period of the Churches State cannot fall in with the frame of Providence, nor that great design of Grace in that rare Structure, which is yet to be set up of the Christian Church, can take place of Jews and Gentiles incorporate in one Body, with so intire an union, as to know no more in any distinct way their natural birth-right and descent, after the Flesh, from the Seed of *Japhet and Shem*, but as joint members of *Christ's universal Kingdom*, and made one in him.

4. Tho the event will clear how far the measure of these times, and of the fulness of the Gentile Church is now accomplished, yet so far as Scri-

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pture Signs does give light and evidence herein; it may, with a suitable sobriety, be judged, that the *close hereof* is drawing very near, when we see what length the *course of the Gospel* hath come, according to what is so expressly foretold by *Christ, through the whole World*; when these times which *Asia and Africa* once had are finished, when the *Sun also in its gradual course*, as to this blessed light, hath staid so long in the *west*, and so visibly now *declining* there, as to the whole *Western Churches*, I hope towards a near, and bright rising once again in the *East*; yea, when the intent of Providence, in these late discoveries, and Plantations in *America*, is so evidently directed for this end, that these times of the Gentiles, now in a separate state, may have a more full perfecting: when we see also such a *signal declining of the Ottoman Empire*, it may be as a *Promissory sign* for this end, and have a preparatory respect to that *last exit*, and expiring thereof, which is to be a matter of our Faith under the *6th Vial*; and if, the expressing thereof suitable to the *Apocalypticke Stile*, seems dark; it's also for that end that there should be a humble becoming search herein, to know the intent of the Spirit of God. But there is *one Sign* of another nature, which may have a very sad aspect on the present time, when we see to what a height the *Apostasie of the Gentile Church* in the most reformed state thereof this day is now come, with so visible a growing *Eclipse*, which

I judge may be too justly feared go not off, until once these *times be fulfilled*, and the dawning of that long expected, and assuredly promised day of the *Churches last restoration*, break up, as the first solemn entry on the Glory of that blessed *Millennium*, in that sence the Scripture does warrant our hope hereof.

5. As this great *revolution* will be the most signal, and eminent *period of time*, which is yet to take place in *Prophetick Chronology*; So must I humbly judge, that such a *reiterated testimony of the Holy Ghost*, to the perfecting of the *times*, and *fulness of the Gentiles*, as an entry on a new state of things is most expressly *set up as a publick mark and standart*, for giving light to the *Churches course* in the future times thereof, whereby a safe and clear judgement may be attained both in the *application of Prophecies*, and as to the *great designs of Providence* now in the *last days*; & is it not made clear by express testimony of the Scripture herein, that we are not to expect that *day of Restoration to the Jewish race*, or the taking off the *vail of judicial blindness* of their minds, until once this great *event* take place, but accordingly we are to have our faith directed; nor are to expect such a manifestation of the *glory of Christ*, until then, upon that *highest period of his reign* here on the earth, in such a manner, as we are warranted to believe the same. But, it may be too justly feared, that before these *times be fulfilled*, the *harvest of the earth*,

*earth*, which seems in some unusual manner now *ripe* for the *Sickle*, is yet farther to be *reaped*, and some extraordinary work of judgment to have an accomplishment, which may be more strange and astonishing than what hath been known for some Ages past.

6. Whatever *distinct interest* the *Jewish race* hath hitherto had in the World, yet is it evident that the *Covenant of peculiarity*, which once was with that People, is now *void*, and *disannulled*, as to any more divided state, or standing by themselves, but what will then be resolved into a *blessed coalition* with the Gentiles, into one *united state*, wherein *the Lord shall be one*, and *his Name one* in the whole Earth.

7. I know it is doubtful to some, that so great an event of *Providence* is yet to take place, of the *Jews return again to the Lord* in so conspicuous a manner: But can such from any *Church Records* find, that since their *rejection*, and amidst these solemn times which have gone over the *Gentile Church*, of the success of the Gospel, any such noted and *remarkable time of their Conversion* hath occurred, as might, in the least, answer these unquestionable assurances given in the Scripture hereof? but that the continued *induration of this People*, and *vail over their mind*, hath been one of the most signal strokes of Divine Judgment, which was ever inflicted on Men; Or hath any times yet taken place of that *promised effusion of the Spirit of Evangelick*,

*evangelick Repentance* upon them, with a look upon him whom they had pierced, and so great a mourning as must once be with some suitable proportion to their *Apostasie* ; which is assuredly to take place under the times of the *New Testament*, else not at all ; and be such a high spring-tide , as shall be the most near, and immediate *preparatory work*, to their *restoration to a Church-State* ; and being taken in again to the embracements of his love and respect, whom they so despitefully opposed ; yea it's with the flowing of that tide I doubt not, the *Gentiles* shall then have a *new reviving*, when this blessed time is once come, and a proper interest herein as shall be a joint entry on a *new world* to both.

8. It is true, if we look upon the present times, it may *faint* and *stagger our Faith*, as to so great and wonderful a thing, when *so little in a preparatory way* from all appearances is promising hereof ; when on the one hand, the sense of this on Mens Spirits seems so rare, *that the World is now governed by God*, and could not *subsist* one moment by Humane Counsel, or Power, *if he were not a God to it* ; and on the other hand, so extraordinary a time of *oppositions to the growing Interest of Christ's Kingdom*, which he hath received of the *Father* by the *Covenant of Mediation*, and is now near to the *highest period of its visible glory* ; but it hath been clear, and oft strengthening

ening to my Faith, to reflect on these remarkable gradations which the visible Kingdom of our Lord Jesus hath had since his Ascension here on the Earth, both in its triumph over the Pagan World; and in these late times over the Antichristian World; and to see thus, how dark and dismal a state of things still did immediately precede the most bright display of his regal power, and the glory thereof, and how Satan's being let loose, by a penal permission, did appear most then, when his time was short; it's sure it would have seemed as incredible to hope, before the year 1517; for so great and wonderful a revolution, as after followed in the Churches case, as to credit what yet is to be brought forth in the World, and what a day is to shine when this darkness is over.

9. It should indeed, be matter of fear to stretch a confidence on the future state of the Church, where it's warrant is not clear, and will be no comforting light which Men kindle to themselves, though they should walk in the sparks thereof for a time; but it's on this great head of truth the Spirit of God does speak so expressly in this sense, as it cannot possibly bear another; how the times of the Gentiles are to be fulfilled, and in what respects. I. That here will be no Unchurching, or rejecting of them, no more than it will prejudice the National Interest of Kingdoms and Nations, by becoming the Kingdoms of our Lord Jesus, which shall redound  
then

then to their highest glory, and temporal advantage; but that when these limited *times* are once finished, there shall be no more a *Gentile Church* by it self on the Earth, but the *Constitution of Christ's universal Kingdom* shall be then such, as there will be neither *Jew*, nor *Greek*, *Barbarian*, nor *Scythian*, and neither *Circumcision*, or *Uncircumcision* any more known; and no National emulation, or envy, to interfere with that great design of Grace. 2. It is a shutting up of these *times* as will be then the *Churches* entry on a new date, and computation of time, as to the course of Providence therewith, which is to begin with that last, and great *Epocha*, in the re-entrance on a new state; thus did *Israel's* coming out of *Egypt*, give a new date of time unto them. 3. It is then also will be the close and shutting up of that blessed administration of Providence, and designs thereof, with respect to the separate state of the *Gentiles*, though no final divorce, but to make way for their return, and recovery of their first love, the love of their espousals, by a new betrothment of them to himself; and such a casting down only as will then raise them up farther with a new and joint interest in that rare frame of his *Universal Kingdom*. 4. But it's surely to the *Western reformed Churches*, that these last times of the *Gentiles*, and their fulfilling, hath a peculiar respect; who have not only had so long a day now given them, but their times renewed by a second restoration, which hath

not



not been the privilege of the *Eastern Churches*; and now *as this season is hastning away*, so is *providence in a quick and swift motion* this day, the more near it is to the *close*, wherein both goodness and severity from the Lord will eminently appear; that as in the one respect he will no longer bear with the *Gentile Church*, when the measure of their *sin* (which is now at such a height) is once *filled up*, nor restrict the glory of the Gospel light thereto, which for this 1500 years hath been the *proper sphere* where it hath shined, yet will even then give them *new and bigger privileges*, when there shall be no dividing distances, more or separations in the whole *Church of Christ*. But O what a subject of admiration and joy may these times be, that have gone over the *Gentile Church*! What *triumphs* hath our *blessed head* had there, in the power of his own Grace, since their first espousals, in the issue of these extraordinary *trials* and *sufferings* allotted thereto? What innumerable testimonies hath he had from the *Gentiles*, of his being infinitely dearer to them than their *Lives*, and what *endearments of love* have passed betwixt their God and them; of whom also is the greatest interest of the *Church Triumphant* now made up, and I hope *the close of their times* is yet to make an eminent *accession* there to, and will be filled up yet more with *special fruits* and *services of Love* to him.

## S E C T. II.

**I** Have desired to abstract in the foregoing Discourse from entering on that so much controverted head of the *Millennium*, farther than to prevent mistake, as to what it relates to there, and is held forth, as to the great design of Providence which is now on foot about the *Kingdom of Christ*, and that *higher Glory and Splendor* it will yet have on the Earth; it hath been with astonishment, that I have oft thought on these strange and different senses, which are on this *Prophecick Truth*, when there is so much from the Scripture to be expository, and give light herein, but wherein I differ from such as are of eminent note and learning in this matter, is with a true honour and respect otherwise; onely I shall offer some few thoughts thereon to the judgment and trial of such for the Truths sake.

I. If the *personal return and reign of Christ* in his *Human Nature* upon this Earth, can possibly be now expected, whom the *Heavens must contain*, until the times of the *restitution of all things*, and that the *whole administration of Providence* about the Church Militant be accomplished, and the mystery of God herein finished, when there will be no more  
use

use of *time* ; but, it's sure, this *promised Millennium* must have its proper room in the course of Providence, onely within *time*, whilst the Church is yet Militant, on the Earth, and the last *battle* thereof to follow the same.

2. Or, is it supposable, that our *blessed Lord* should be the continued *object of Humane Sense*, for a time, on this Earth, in the *Glory, and Splendour* of a *visible appearance*, which this State of Mortality we are in could not possibly admit ; except Men would infer his coming under a vail, and to act some part of his *humiliation* herein ; or otherwise, that the *Earth* be turned unto *Heaven*.

3. If the Appearance of our *Redeemer in Heaven*, after his *Ascension in the Union of the two Natures*, brought such an additional Glory hither to the *Church Triumphant*, Can it be possibly judged, that the *Glorious Tabernacle of his Humane Nature, in which the Godhead dwells Bodily*, and admits of no *ubiquity*, should be withdrawn thence to this lower Earth for so long a time, who is *set down at the right hand of his Father, to reign*, and exerce his Office, as *Mediator* there, until the *Elect* be wholly gathered in, and all his *Enemies subdued*? yea, could such a discovery of his *visible appearance* to the World, which exceeds all the *Miracles* whatever were, since the beginning of time, be compatible with an *immediate opposition to his Reign, and Government*,

vernment, by the Nations, upon *Satan's* being let loose, after the expiring of this *Millennium*; and to suppose a *Second Ascension of Christ* unto *Heaven*, from his Church here, which must be unavoidably inferred from his *visible Personal Reign* for such a limited time.

4. But on the other hand, as to the *appearance of our Lord Jesus in the Glory and Splendor of his Kingdom*, without any visibility in his *Humane Nature*, which is yet to take place; I do, with full assurance, believe, it shall unexpressibly exceed all, which hath ever been known, since his *Ascension*; to which period he hath reserved the highest degrees of *effusion of his Spirit* to his Church, and of the *intimacy of Communion with himself* unto Men; as also more full measures and *discoveries of light* on his revealed truth, than what hath been attained formerly; but of no *new light*, which doth not accord with the same; yea, that one of the greatest *Harvests of the return of Prayer*, after a *Seed-time of many ages past* will be then *reaped*, with a more near Intercourse and Trade with Heaven; nor is it to be questioned, that some extraordinary *dispensation of Miracles*, and immediate appearance of *our blessed head*, in the glory of his power, this way, will wait on such a revolution of time, with that tremendous sence, and awe of his *Divine Majesty* on the Conscience of his greatest adversaries, as to cause them *feign subjection*, and bow down before him;

him ; but, Oh that such a time were more suitably prepared for, and the Subject of Prayer for its coming, than of Contendings, and Disputes about the same.

5. Though the fixing of this *great period*, be convincingly manifest, *under the sound of the last Trumpet*, yet is it not to be judged, that it will be all alongst at the same *height*, but to have *some gradual advance*, from the *first entry* thereon, nor that such a *definite time of a thousand years* is to be otherwise judged, than of some remarkable *duration of time*, as to this blessed Reign, when in the *value, and splendour thereof*, the light, and brightness of *one day then*, shall be as *seven days in one* ; and the glory of *one year* such, as shall ballance with that of *a thousand years before*, and is to be reckoned in this sense, according to his computation, *with whom one day is as a thousand years.*

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### S E C T. III.

**S**ince amongst these *Kingdoms*, and *Nations*, which, under the *Last Trumpet*, are to be by a special surrender, made the *Lords*, for making way to this higher Splendor, and extent of his *Kingdom* in the World ; *Britain and Ireland* may be judged to have a peculiar room, and interest, to which the sense of that *donation by the*

Father to the Son, of the Isles, and uttermost parts of the earth to be his inheritance, does most particularly relate; it does lead me to some reference farther on that head, which I have formerly touched, to be considered; if the Lord hath dealt so with any Nations of the Gentiles, under the New Testament, especially since the blowing of the 7th Trumpet, and entry on that blessed reformation from Popery, as he hath dealt with these three Nations, both as to great experiments of Providence, and the dispensation of Grace; yea, if the Kingdom of Israel and Judah was stated in a more near relation to God, in a Moral respect, as to what's most essential for a Nations being the Lords, than this day these Nations are, though not in things Typical, or Ceremonial, yet under higher Priviledges of Grace, now in the day of the Gospel; which may be farther evident, 1. From so great an expence, and cost, which the Lord hath wared, in planting, and letting forth a Vineyard there, and bequeathing such a Ministry, to go forth on the Embassie of the Gospel, as in innumerable instances, did both burn, and shine before the World, in the Service of their day. 2. In such measures, and increase of light, as it could not be strange, that the Lord should take some higher proofs, and trials of the same, from his Church therein, than of other Churches answerable to such a Talent. 3. These out-lettings, and effusions of the Spirit of God, which

which have been there so discernable, though we see the *Ebb* now, to be as *low*, in the life, and power of Religion, as once this *Tide* was conspicuous. 4. Yea, it may be said since the *Primitive times*, there hath in no place of the Earth been a *greater harvest of solid Christians*, who did shine in the Truth, and power of true Sanctity, than hath, since the *Reformation*, been in these *Islands*; nor have more *singular instruments* been raised up, with eminency of induments, and a *heroick greatness of spirit* in appearing for God, and his Truth. 5. And should we ever lose sight of such *solemn, and singular engagements* these Nations have been brought under, by a surrender to the Lord, and to be his in *Covenant with him*, though the highest contempt, and violations hereof be of small regard this day, which yet threatens more the going forth of a *Sword to avenge the same*, than what seems most visible from any *Humane Power*. 6. I must add on this head, these *surprising, and seasonable interpositions of marvellous acts of Providence* by a *divine immediate band*, in the most extream exigence of these Churches; when no Humane Reason could have foreseen the same; so that the measure of our *Talent for observation* hereof, hath been as *Five*, when other places hath had but *Two* for this end imparted to them.



## S E C T. IV.

**I**T is also unquestionable, that now in this *last Age*, the Lord's dealing with the *Publick State of Britain, and Ireland*, hath been yet in a more singular way, than in any times past, or with other of the *Reformed Churches*; as may cause great thoughts of heart, to consider, what *manner of time* our Lot hath been cast in; but since a naked remembrance of such an *extraordinary series of changes*, as have of late gone over this Generation, or what was Mens part herein, does little tend to see, and admire God, with most, who consider the same, or to discern wisely his work in such singular Providences; though this be of a higher concern than the rise, or fall of Monarchies, or the shakings of Publick Settlements in the civil interest of a Nation, if Mens great business in the Earth lies with God, more than with Men: I shall therefore speak to some things to which a serious reflex work on these late times, does most specially relate, and are more largely touched in the preceding Discourse.

I. It should be of great advantage to discern, and understand in such a manner these times past, as to see an immediate Divine, and supernatural causality in such amazing successive changes, that, might inforce Mens Souls to bow down, with a  
reve-

reverent, and tremendous sence of the Majesty of God herein, yea, keep this from ever being a subject of ordinary thoughts in reflecting on the same.

2. To see what an *unusual variation*, hath been in the ways, and methods of Providence about the *publick State of Britain*, in this *Age*, from the way and procedure of the Lord in times past, and *former Precedents*; and though much be in the dark, this day, as to *his voice, and intent*, for answering the ends hereof; yet such as are of a discerning Spirit, may have another prospect of the *Work, and Counsel of God*, when it's brought in a more *full, and entire Frame* before us, than any present actors then on *the Stage*, whilst things were in their first *mould*: tho it is no easie thing in such a *reflex work*, to improve those extraordinary Providences past, by a just, and suitable *application thereof* to the *present day*, so as to see how *each step* herein in its *successive place and room*, hath still tended, to give light to another, and for a more full *discerning of the work of God in these times*, and *what of the night it is now*, as to the *State of the Church*.

3. It is to see, and *reflect on these great decisions*, which have been by an unpreventible conduct of Providence *in the rising and falling of Humane Interest*, so contrary to all Humane Reason, and expectation, if ordinary and *natural causes* should have brought forth their *usual*

*effects* ; and in what manner the greatest depths of Humane Policy, and confidence, when they seem'd most secure from any hazard upon *earth* ; have been derided from *Heaven*, and men *poison'd in their own cup* ; and what a rare *reflex work* should this be, to see, in what an extraordinary way the Providences of these times past have been directed to *Seal Instruction on the Spirits of Princes, and Great Men*, and let them know in how small a time, the great God can pour contempt on such, and cause *Princes to walk on Foot, when Servants did ride on horseback* ; but, it is no less matter of sad *reflection*, and may be to this day, what *returns* these *Methods*, which God has taken in a *monitory way*, have had from most, by forgetting the *Storm* they were once in, when they have got to the *Haven*, and betaking them selves to another *Strength, than that, which raised them*.

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## S E C T. V.

**I**T may be indeed easier to *translate* our thoughts to things past, and judge thereof, with respect to *Humane Interests and Designs*, than it is to consider *the way and conduct of Providence*, and what a clear light, the *succession of such amazing wonders*, as have been in the *Age past*, brings herewith to this *period of time* we are now in.

I judge

I judge that among the most *singular inducements*, which God doth bequeath to some of his Servants more than to others, these Two have a peculiar room ; the one is *to discern, and try the Spirits, whether they be of God or not*, which is indeed one of the greatest attainments of Spiritual wisdom ; The other is , *to discern , and understand the present times*, wherein our Lot is fallen, which was that proper eminency of the *men of Issachar* , by some more extraordinary Gift from the Lord herein to them, than, to other of the Tribes. But, though most, who are so inquisitive about *Publick News*, and Occurrents in this day, keep at the farthest distance from what may Impress their Spirits, with the sense of a *God-head* , in the *eminent appearances hereof* ; and are resolute to see nothing farther than the influence of *Natural Causes* in Humane affairs ; yet I hope, there be many such , who may be little in the view of the World, of a *humble , tender, and subdued spirit* , with whom the Counsel of God is , and have some near familiar Intercourse with him herein, as to *his work about the Church* , in the day and place they are in ; though these are such as durst not seek *to be wise above what is written*, whose *Voice will not be heard in the Street* herein, but where the *River is deepest* , there also does it *run most still* ; yea, who would tremble to be so bold with God, as to set *a day or year* to his appearance,

pearance, and, in such a precise peremptory way, to determine, how long it may be *to the end of these wonders*; humble *Sobriety* and *Fear* is ever the native result of the most *near intimacy*, and *Communion with the Spirit of God*. I have according to my small measure of light, offered some thoughts upon such a *Subject*, in these *foregoing Papers*, and with respect thereto I shall humbly offer but a few *references* to those who are at more advantage to *understand the times*, and *discern wisely the Work of God therein*.

1. What *Aspect* so great, and notable a *Crisis*, as hath been of late, and yet is in the *Publick State of Britain*, hath this day, whether by more *Promissory Signs*, and *Indications*, or what rather hath a *Mortal Aspect*, since we are not left to a conjectural judgment in such a case; nor is an *extraordinary Prophetick Light* required for the same, when it's sure God is immutably just, a God impartially hating sin; in whose way, both towards *Nations and Persons* he keeps the same measure, with his *Revealed Truth*; we see, though *our eyes do little affect our heart*, that no extraordinary acts of Providence, and Vicissitudes of the Times do as yet Work on Men's hearts to any suitable change thereof, or have put a stop to so visible, and growing an *Apostacy* from the Christian Faith, as is this day, in these Nations, both in the purity, and power thereof; we see what a *load of guilt* these 30 years past have, in an  
unusual

unusual manner, brought on *these Nations* beyond the measure of former times, which are ready to *sink under such a weight*, though it be little felt; But, oh! doth the Cry hereof to Heaven now cease, for God's coming down to judge accordingly, when the *Sense* of it is gone off Mens Spirits, or brings the long deferring of judgment in such an unusual manner, *a reprimand*, but what may rather speak its being sore, and of some extraordinary kind, when it at last comes, the more extraordinary the measures of *Divine Patience* have been to reclaim?

2. It's a reference of a serious concern I must make farther about the present time, If *any particular Church, or Nation*, stands by the security of an *absolute Promise*, which is the undoubted privilege of the *Church Universal*, but must clear first their confidence, and claim unto God, on the warrant of some *conditional Promises* of his word, for his interressing himself in their case, and deliverance, according as they dare humbly plead the *condition*, to which these *Promises relate*, since the honour of his truth, and faithfulness, is relative to the one, as well as to the other; it's sure, *if God be for us*, and for a Kingdom, and Nation, *who then can be against us?* But, can there be any possible claim in Faith for the same, but, in *the way of a Promise* from himself, if the *extent of our Faith* may go no farther, than the *extent of his revealed truth*? Or can Men stretch their Pleadings with God, beyond that

that immutable constitution of his own Word will bear, *the Lord is with you, whilst you are with him; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you?* 2 Chron. 15. 3. It hath been on some sad thoughts hereon, that I must leave this to the enquiry of others, who understand more of the times, how the *State and Security of these Nations now stands in this respect*, whether alone by an extraordinary forbearance of God, or in a *Promissory way*; and if the *Scripture* be given no less absolutely to *secure the Protestant Reformed Church by Promise*, than to be the *alone Rule of their Faith*, without which no Humane Power, or Confederacy can avail; for if that *declarative testimony, and assurance which the God of Truth hath given*, Jerem. 18. 7. be irrevocable, and the unchangeable rule of his Procedure with Men, we then are not left to grope in the dark, as to our confidence, or fear this day.

3. I must make a reference also, upon what is more fully spoke to on that *Subject*; which is not to any *divided party*, but to all such who in this day take the *Times to heart*, and have some *raised thoughts, and desires to the glory of Christ, and of his Reign here in the World*: If such a *Nation can be saved*, or have any true confidence towards God for *Success*, where the *Dominion and Power of Antichrist is fallen, and brake*, by an *eminent appearance of God herein*, and yet the *Kingdom of Christ is not set up in the*



room hereof, by a new Surrender and Subjecting of themselves to his Ordinances, and Laws; but that some signal stroke of Divine Wrath, and Judgment, will inevitably follow thereon; Since,

1. There can be no higher affront offered to our *blessed Head*, than a turning thus the purest Profession of his truth in the *Reformed Religion*, to serve a *Secular interest*, and design, which is given for eternal ends, and to divide the same from its great intent, which is, that *such a Nation, and People should be the Lord's*, and come under his *Dominion and Reign*: A *Negative Protestant* is a strange and dreadful Paradox, which is no *Antichrist*, as to the *Papal Power*; and yet no *Christ*, as to his blessed *Preeminence*, and *Authority* over them; who, at once, can bear Zeal for the *Protestant Interest*, and the highest *Enmity to the Protestant Religion*; yet is this day now such, as it may be more easie to find a 1000 *Protestants*, than one such *Lover of Christ*, whose Soul, under the Power, and Attractions of his Love, is entirely joined to him.

2. This makes it the more formidable, that the time and season, which was 1500 years past *foretold*, is now come, for *Christ's taking to himself his great power to Reign*; So that we cannot be in the dark here, except Men shut their eyes on his going forth by such an extraordinary Administration of Providence, by the *Sword*, and *Shakings of these Nations*, now in these 50 years past, to assert the Authority

thority of his Regal Power over the same, wherein his declared testimony, by his Word, and the taking place hereof, in the event of what was foretold, *Revel. 11. 15.* does meet with such clear evidence, as without a Judicial Stroak on Mens Judgments, cannot possibly be hid. 3. *The Nations be still angry*, and their enmity, and opposition to the interest of *Christ's Kingdom* is the more visibly raised, the *nearer approaches* that his Work and design herein make, yet will it not avail or serve for another end, but assuredly to make way for his *wrath and to rule them by a rod of Iron*, until his end be accomplished, and that *Princes and Great Men give their Power*, with a full consent, to *advance the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ*; yea, if it be a dark Riddle to Many, what these remarkable *oppositions*, which have been in *Britain in this Age*, to any *Civil Settlements* there, should mean, there will, I doubt not, be a more full discovery by *Providence* made hereof, to clear, that no *Humane Counsel or Force*, shall ever *Settle these Nations*, with any true fixedness, until this great design be joined in with; and that now is the time come, that *Nations must surely stand or fall* in their Temporal Interest, as they answer the *Intent*, and Counsel of the Lord herein.

4. This may be matter of farther enquiry likewise, what access is now in so *judicial a period of time*,

to stand before the Lord in the gap, and breack, for turning away his wrath; if thus Grace may yet interpose, when judgement is ready to break forth, as to these Nations, and the *Axe laid to the root of the Tree*; yea, in what respect *such a call* for the same, as is, *Ezek. 22. 30.* may be applicable to this day. This is a *Subject* I have at some length before spoken to, onely as to its clear, and expresse application to the present time, and state of these Churches; I would refer a few things farther to be considered by such, who are at more advantage to be seers, and discerners of so extraordinary a time. 1. If such a Call as was then given to *Judah*, and *Jerusalem*, was not a publick precedent of the way, and condescendence of Grace, even when wrath was going forth to the uttermost, and as the last call, ere the treaty was shut up, for after times of the Church, did thus come to the lowest terms, and in such a manner speak from the Lord; "Is there not now one, to appear, and stand in so eminent a hazard, with such a true National Love, as to lay their most endeared private interest at the stake to save the same, and stand for God herein, though they should stand alone, which should be as rare, and desirable a Society, to have a room in, as is upon the Earth; and to find such an erection thereon, by an excitement from Heaven, of Adventurers for God, and the publick Interest of his Church, to appear  
in

"in the breach; when 'tis as a defenced City,  
 "laid open to so extream, and imminent ha-  
 "zard. 2. Though extraordinary excitements  
 to a service of this kind, as we find on Scrip-  
 ture Record, are rarely found in the Earth,  
 yet it's sure, *the duty of Moral excitation, and*  
*up-stirring* in such a case, ceaseth not, which  
 might make way for a more *immediate gale of*  
*Divine influence and power, and to open such a door*  
*for some restoring work in these Nations,* as should  
 make way for it self over all *Mountains,* and  
 what at other times might seem insuperable.  
 3. If the astonishing *signs of Wrath and Judg-*  
*ment,* which are so discernable now, be truly un-  
 derstood, it may be too evident, that something  
*very extraordinary* beyond what we have seen,  
 is assuredly near, *either as to Judgment, or Mer-*  
*cy;* and how things are hastening, in an unusual  
 manner, to a *fatal period,* if Grace do not yet farther  
 interpose, to raise the *Spirits of some* with such a  
*divine heroick Motion,* as the Service of so ex-  
 traordinary a time may need, and to a *higher Re-*  
*soluteness in duty* by visible *Oppositions:* But, Oh  
 how hard is it to move, or act, in such a Ser-  
 vice, when it's at the *lowest ebb of the Tide,* and  
 the first cure to the *intestine conflicts,* and *distem-*  
*pers* of this day, which are boiled up to such a  
 height, is like to be some unusual *stroak of Di-*  
*vine Judgment,* which may work at last, when  
 all ordinary means for this end seem ineffect-  
 ual?

5. And

5. And should not the *voice of such a Call*, for appearing in so great and hazardous a *breach* on the Churches Interest, be matter of serious thoughts, when it hath a *limited time and season* for the same, which may be quickly lost, but never regained again; and comes so discernably on such an intent. 1. To speak to this Generation after such extraordinary *warnings past*, and a *new day* yet more given, that it is to *prove them* yet once again, *before the decree go forth*, and that *he who waits to be gracious*, and holds the ballance in his own hand, does wait for such an *application* unto him, as might yet tend to a *respite of wrath and Judgment*, when it's ready to break forth; in which respect, *Prophe-tick Warnings* of some great stroke on a People, may be true, and warranted, though they take no place in the *event*, when, according to that, *Jerem. 18. 7.* the interposing of a Peoples *Repentance* may sist its execution for a time: 2. To let Men know, that every *day, and hour of such a limited season*, when it's come to the *last period of divine patience*, is more highly valuable and momentous for improvement of the same, than many years may be otherwise; and a making light hereof, more highly provoking to the Majesty of God, and adds more to the Roll of such a Peoples Indictment, than what hath been formerly. 3. But how near the *Final expiration of such a Call*, yet with an of-

fer of Grace is reserved onely to him, to whom the *Issues of Death* belong; and though there be an infallible conduct, by Scripture-light, and the general rule of God's ordinary dispensations with Men, to discern the approaches of Judgment on a People, and the sad effects thereof in their proper causes; yea, how night is coming on, when the long shadows of the Evening are stretched out, yet are the set measures of his forbearance and patience, one of the depths of his way, which Men cannot sound, or comprehend; but, it may be feared, that the most near immediate signs, and premonitions of impendent Judgment, as to the Churches of Britain and Ireland, are in a great measure past, and have discharged their Commission, without any suitable regard thereof; yea, that there may be little, either of Faith, or Fear, when it comes; and I must judge, if a clear view were this day of all these extraordinary Monitory signs and warnings, which in 30 years past have been given to awake these Nations of England and Scotland, with the most convincing evidence, were now, at once, set in our sight, it might have a strange astonishing aspect, as no thing but a mortal Lethargy could take off the sense, and impression thereof off Mens Spirits.

6. There is yet one Reference farther on such a Subject, I may be needful to make; What respect can the intent of such an extraordinary call have,

have, for as to make up the bedge, and stand in the gap before the Lord, for a Nation, as that, *Ezek. 22. 30*, when nothing, in a Moral way, seems to work this day; and Divine warnings tend only to be a publick Theme of derision yea, a dispensation of Miracles, were it given forth now, would be, to appearance, little operative, or convincing with most: yet does this no way take off the evidence, and urgency of such a Call to our case, wherewith, as Men may see a lovely condecency to the gracious nature, and excellencies of our God, in a Judiciary procedure with a Nation, that has been so dear, and beloved of him; it is directed to witness, what regard he hath to one such, who is of a more raised spirit, than others, for the vindication of his glory, and the publick Interest and Safety of the Land, wherein they are, when it's like to perish, and what room one example of such may have in a restoring and saving work for the Church in such a place; yea thus how valuable with him these are by whose example, the fear, and veneration of God is kept up with lustre and evidence, amidst a perverse Generation; it's to shew, also, where Judgment is not absolutely determined, in what a measure the Spirit of Faith, and Intercession may be let forth to some of his Saints in an extraordinary time, to make way for his acceptance of a Few, in behalf of a Nation; and to witness to the World the preva-



lence and regard even of one *Favourite with God*, who is admitted to more special intimacy with himself, when thus impowered for a more *extraordinary Service* of this kind, above their ordinary reach and allowance; and what a *bid influence* these oft have on the *administration of Providence about Kingdoms and Nations*, whose true interest, and *intrinsic Strength*, may lie more in a few such, than in *Humane Strength*, or the *greatest Armies*, which yet, in the order of means, is so absolutely requisite.

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## S E C T. VI.

**V**W hen there is such cause to fear the outgoings of *Divine Wrath*, and *Judgment*, in some unusual manner, it should be a hopeful and promising *Sign*, if a *higher study* were, to meet God in the way of *mercy*, and for paying in some more suitable *tribute of the Glory of his Works*, in the Service of *Gratitude*; that the *talent of these nations*, hath, in this respect, been something extraordinary, with a most singular call to an *admiring and observing work*, upon the great acts of *Divine Providence*, and so unusual a *conjunction* herein, above all natural causes, is unquestionable; but for what account can be given

given on the improvement hereof, seems not onely to be a *hiding of the same under the ground*, for the most part, but that the Spirit of this *Age*, is, in a strange manner, at work, how to darken, so far as possible, the most eminent, and immediate Discoveries of God, unto Men, in the way of Providence, and to subject his *works*, as well as his *word*, to their reason, and the alone influence of *second causes*. But if it be truly sought this day to have *God propitions to these nations*, and to serve the end of such great Providences, as have been, of late, towards the same; this *Study* will have another weight upon Men's Spirit, about which I would offer *a few things*, with a *humble reference to such as are under the highest trust*, and of the greatest capacity to promote such a *Service*, wherein the *Glory of God*, and the *strength, and standing of the State of Britain*, is so nearly interested. 1. if a *publick return, and oblation of praise*, upon any eminent acts of Providence and deliverance to a *nation*, which are of a *national extent*, can be seriously designed for such an end, where there is not here, with the same *publick care* extended, to have such singular passages of Providence sought out, and considered under these *circumstances*, as may be most convincing, and *demonstrative of God herein*; and to have such a *venerable remembrance* kept up of the same, with the highest honour, as may not be

bounded with the transient work of a *Thanksgiving-day*, which had so great a weight still with the *Church under the Old Testament*, in any singular cases of Providence, and is of the same *moral* and perpetual use, in *these times* we are now in. 2. Should it not be justly expected, on a suitable return, and *retribution of Praises*, by the *complex Body of a nation*, and the *Rulers* thereof, upon any great, and marvellous works of God, for their *Security and Deliverance*, that they be reckoned of such value, as a *national Interest*, and as illustrious, and *publick monuments* of Divine Providence; yea, that a *Book and register of remembrance of this kind*, be of that weight, as to come under the *Publick care of Civil Authority*, as a *national Record*, which I doubt not, in these latter times, and upon the *growing glory of Christ's visible Kingdom* in the *World*, will be reckoned amongst the highest *publick concerns of nations*, and of the *Churches of Christ* to bring up, what hath been wanting, and detain'd of such a *rent*, and *Tribute of praise unto God*, upon the greatness of his *Works*. 3. Since the credit, and weight of such a *Service*, for keeping up the highest respect to such great acts, and passages of Providence, as relate to a particular *Church and State*, depends on the most *exact inquiry*, and *search* upon the *evidence* hereof, and of the more immediate appearance, and *signature of a*  
*Divine*

*Divine power* thereon; it should be most convincing for such an end, and stands to the highest reason, if a *trust* of that weight, be by a *publick care, and commitment*, just under their hand, whose *integrity and judiciousness* might be most convincing for such an intent, and of having no *partial respect*, or end herein, but only for the *honour, and exalting of God, and strengthening men in the Christian Faith*, by so great a *Seal* thereto, and for the interest of the *Posterity*; wherein, I doubt not, but these who may be at the greatest advantage herein, though, in some lesser differences of Judgment they should not so fully meet, yet under such *excitements*, of a Service so *highly honourable for God, and publick interest of their Generation*, would intirely unite for promoting the same. 4. And it may be judged, if the *honor of God, and of his works*, with the true interest of the *Succeeding Race*, have a weight on this *Age*, that it's one of the highest *national concerns* this day, to have the *credit of Tradition, and conveyance of these more illustrious acts of Providence*, which have been in this time taken, under a publick care; the sad want, and defect of which, for having so great an *interest and treasure* thus secured, and kept clear to succeeding times, hath been one of the great prejudices to the *Truth*, and advance of the *Kingdom of Christ in the World*; and now in a time of such *fears*, as to what may be

yet coming on the Earth, and on such a part of the same; I should with assurance hope, that such a study, may have some peculiar Seal, and testimony of Divine respect following thereon; and, a Record of that nature, design'd, and promoted by Civil Authority, should have yet more eminent, and signal providences of mercy given for filling up of the same, to make that Promise good, how such as are faithful to observe, and record lesser things, shall have yet more on a national interest added, yea, from thence date convincing evidences of his respects, when it is purely designed for God, and to keep up the honour of his Name in such an *Attheistick* Age.

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F I N I S

